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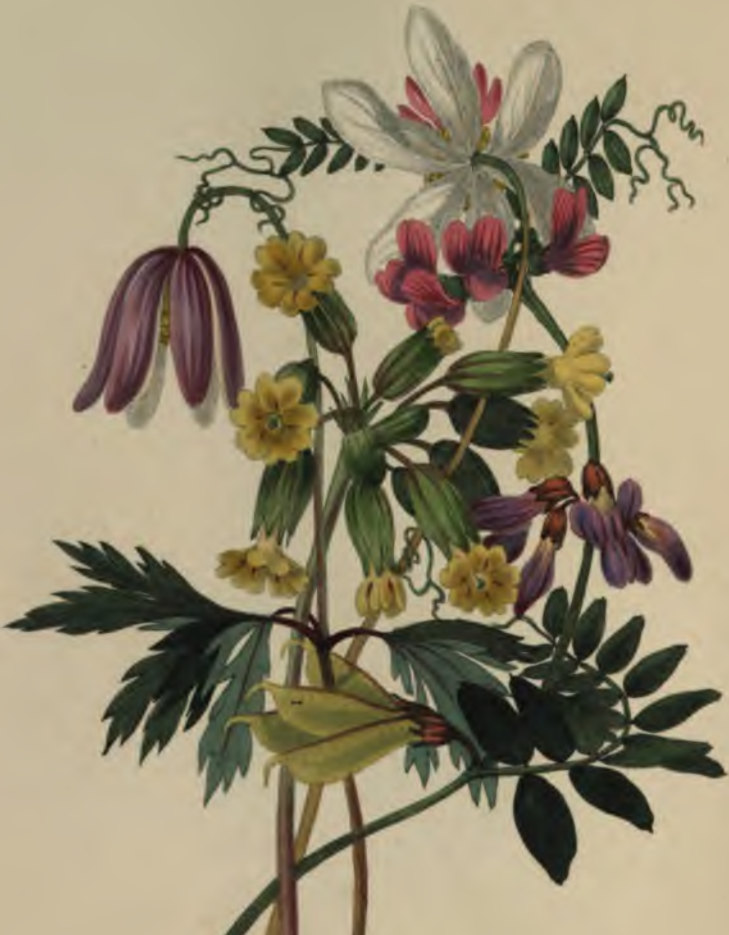
THE MORAL OF FLOWERS.



THE

-34.

MORAL OF FLOWERS,

ILLUSTRATED BY COLOURED ENGRAVINGS.

> “ Needs no show of mountain hoary,
>   Winding shore, or deepening glen,
> Where the landscape in its glory,
>   Teaches truth to wandering men :
> Give true hearts but earth and sky
> And some flowers to bloom and die,
> Homely scenes and simple views
> Lowly thoughts may best infuse.”
>
> “ Consider the lilies of the field.”

LONDON:
LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMAN,
AND J. HATCHARD;
AND M. ROBINSON, LEEDS.

1833.

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BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA ·

PREFACE.

In these rhyming days, when almost every one lays claim to some acquaintance with the muse, vanity can hope so little from the distinction of authorship, that the writer of the following pages would humbly trust some better feeling has induced her to offer them to the public.

Many of the pieces were written long before the subject of Flowers was so fashionable as it has now become. They owe their origin, in fact, to the request of a friend who wished for a few poetical sketches to accompany her own drawings; and the appearance of one of them (how obtained the writer is not aware) in a little work of the day, first suggested the idea that, if collected into one volume, they might possibly be acceptable to many readers, from the moral and religious hints they convey. She hopes, also, though fully sensible how open many of them are to criticism, that the universal interest of the subject will procure for them the indulgence of the public.

Flowers are a delight to every one; to some, perhaps, merely for their beauty and fragrance; to others, independently of these acknowledged charms, for the varied pleasurable associations and thoughts they suggest. And foremost amongst these is the assurance they afford of the exuberant goodness of God. "The provision which is made of a variety of objects not necessary to life, and ministering only to our pleasures, shews," says an elegant and learned author, "a further design than that of giving existence, it speaks an intention to superadd pleasure to that existence." And who does not feel this when he looks on the hedge-row and the mead

> "Full of fresh verdure and unnumbered flowers,
> The negligence of nature."

Nor is this the only lesson they impart; they remind us also of the superintending providence of the Almighty. After contemplating the more stupendous features of creation, "the heavens, the work of His fingers, the moon and the stars which He has ordained," till overwhelmed with a sense of littleness we exclaim almost with feelings of despondency, "Lord what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?" Has not the sight of a flower so carefully provided for, so exquisitely wrought, and so lavishly endowed with fragrance, recalled the mind to its proper tone, and given emphasis to the question, "Are ye not much better than they?"

But it is when viewed as types of the resurrection that they most vividly affect the imagination and touch the heart. The same inspired volume which tells us "all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field," reminds us also that "that which is sown is not quickened except it die;" when therefore after the dreary, death-like months of winter, we see the "prodigies which power divine performs," clothing each tree and flower in its peculiar and appropriate beauty, who but must acquiesce in the conclusion of the poet, and say

"Shall *I* be left abandoned in the dust
When fate, relenting, lets the flower revive?
Shall nature's voice, to man alone unjust,
Bid him though doomed to perish hope to live?

Is it for this fair virtue oft must strive
With disappointment, penury, and pain?
No. Heaven's immortal spring shall yet arrive,
And Man's majestic beauty bloom again
Bright through the eternal year of love's triumphant reign!"

The writer takes this opportunity of acknowledging her obligations to the various authors whose works she has laid under contribution, and particularly to Sir J. E. Smith and Mr. Drummond, to whom she is mainly indebted for the botanical information contained in the introductions to the several pieces.

The engravings accompanying them, as well as the drawings from which they were taken, (and which have been all made from nature expressly for the work,) are the production of Mr. William Clark, formerly draughtsman and engraver to the London Horticultural Society; a sufficient guarantee, it is presumed, for the excellence of their execution.

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THE MORAL OF FLOWERS.

THE WOOD ANEMONE—BUSH VETCH—AND COWSLIP.

THE WOOD ANEMONE OR WIND FLOWER.

ANEMONE NEMOROSA.

> " And coy anemone, that ne'er uncloses
> Her lips until they're blown on by the wind."

The name of this elegant little flower is derived " from the Greek, *ανεμος*, wind,—some say, because the flower opens only when the wind blows,—others, because it grows in situations exposed to the wind." The sun, however, seems to have full as much influence over it, as it always looks towards him, closing its petals when he sets, and before rain. Its short-lived beauty is thus alluded to by Sir W. Jones,—

> "Youth, like a thin anemone, displays
> His silken leaf, and in a morn decays."

The anemone is one of the many flowers which, according to ancient fable, sprung from the tears of Venus and the blood of Adonis.

THE BUSH VETCH.

VICIA SEPIUM.

Schreber recommends this vicia as excellent food for cattle, but it has not been attended to in England. A very extraordinary variety of the present species, gathered in Scotland by Mr. Arthur Bruce, has only three, four, or five leaflets to each leaf, larger than usual, the largest of all, above an inch long, being in the place of a tendril. Though the vetch, with its curling tendrils and pea-like blossoms, forms such an elegant variety among other spring flowers, I am not aware that it has obtained, by name at least, poetical distinction;—it may, however, claim a place amongst those which Thompson calls "the lowly children of the shade."

THE COWSLIP.

PRIMULA VERIS.

"———— rich in vegetable gold
From calyx pale the freckled cowslip born,
Receives in amber cups the fragrant dews of morn."

Few flowers have received more poetic homage than the cowslip. Shakspeare has immortalized it in the well-known lines,—

" The cowslips tall her pensioners be,
In their gold coats spots we see,
These be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours.

Growing on a tall upright stem, it is supposed he chose them on this account for the court of his Fairy Queen, in allusion to the tall military courtiers called Queen Elizabeth's pensioners. It seems of a very plastic character, and to assume every appearance fancy wills. Milton, when he would "strew the laureat hearse where Lycid lies," speaks of

" Cowslips wan that hang the pensive head."

He introduces it again more cheerfully in Sabrina's song.

“ Whilst from off the waters fleet
Thus I set my printless feet,
O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread.”

But, not to multiply quotations, (for it is every poet's theme,) I will only select in addition a few very beautiful lines from Clare's Village Minstrel, where he invests this little favourite with a devotional character :

“ Bowing adorers of the gale,
Ye cowslips delicately pale,
Upraise your loaded stems :
Unfold your cups of splendour, speak !
Who deck'd you with that ruddy streak
And gilt your golden gems ?

Ye lovely flowers of lowly birth,
Embroiderers of the carpet earth,
That stud the velvet sod ;
Open to spring's refreshing air,
In sweetest smiling bloom declare
Your Maker and your God.”

FIELD FLOWERS.*

Flowers of the field, how meet ye seem,
Man's frailty to pourtray,
Blooming so fair in morning's beam,
Passing at eve away;
Teach this, and oh! though brief your reign,
Sweet flowers, ye shall not live in vain.

Go, form a monitory wreath
For youth's unthinking brow;
Go, and to busy manhood breathe
What most he fears to know;
Go, strew the path where age doth tread,
And tell him of the silent dead.

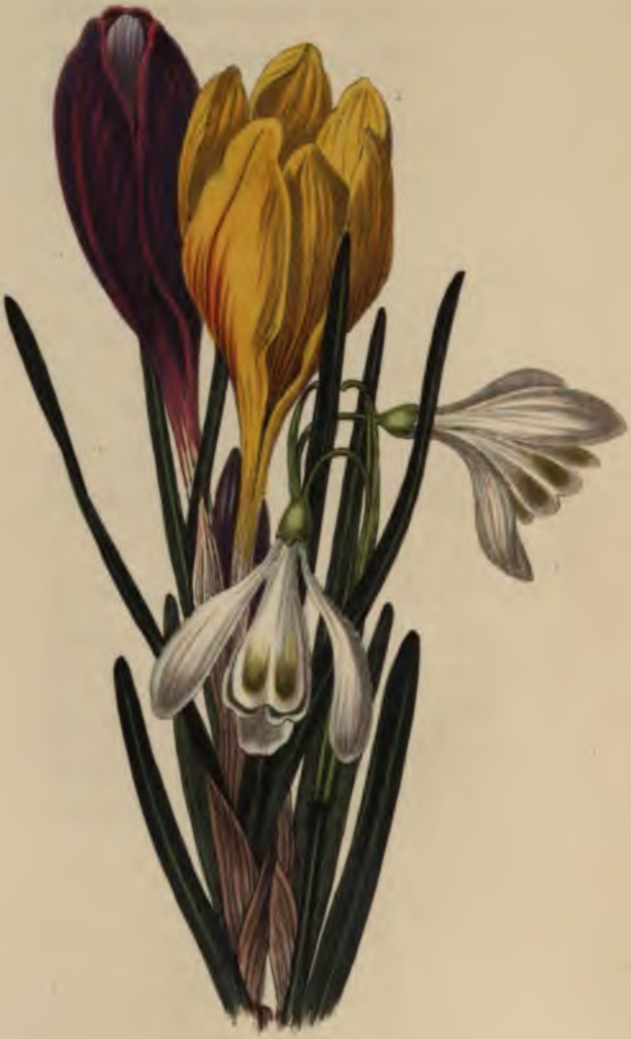
---

* The object which it has been my aim to accomplish in this work is to pursue such a train of reflection or draw such a moral from each flower that is introduced as its appearance, habits, or properties might be supposed to suggest. The first piece, however, is intended as introductory, and the specimens which are illustrated in the plates are only to be considered as the representatives of field-flowers in general.

But whilst to thoughtless ones and gay
Ye breathe these truths severe,
To those who droop in pale decay
Have ye no word of cheer ?—
Oh yes, ye weave a double spell,
And death and life betoken well.

Go, then, where wrapt in fear and gloom
Fond hearts and true are sighing,
And deck with emblematic bloom
The pillow of the dying ;
And softly speak, nor speak in vain,
Of your long sleep and broken chain.

And say that He, who from the dust
Recalls the slumbering flower,
Will surely visit those who trust
His mercy and His power ;
Will mark where sleeps their peaceful clay,
And roll, ere long, the stone away.



THE SNOW-DROP AND CROCUS.

" Fair handed spring unbosoms every grace,
Throws out the snow-drop and the crocus first."

THE SNOW-DROP.

GALANTHUS NIVALIS.

" The frail snow-drop
Born of the breath of winter, and on his brow
Fixed like a pale and solitary star."

This flower, so simply elegant in itself, and so welcome as the earliest harbinger of brighter days, springs up, as it were, heedless of all obstacles,

" While yet the trembling year is unconfirmed,
And winter oft at eve resumes the breeze,
Chills the pale morn, and bids his driving sleets
Deform the day delightless,"

wins its way to every heart, and, when blended with the varied tints of the lively crocus, which closely follows in its train, forms a beautiful and appropriate wreath for the infant spring.

THE CROCUS.

CROCUS VERNUS—AUREUS.

"Ere a leaf is on a bush,
In the time before the thrush
Has a thought about its nest,
Thou wilt come with half a call,
Spreading out thy glossy breast
Like a careless prodigal;
Telling tales about the sun
When we've little warmth or none."

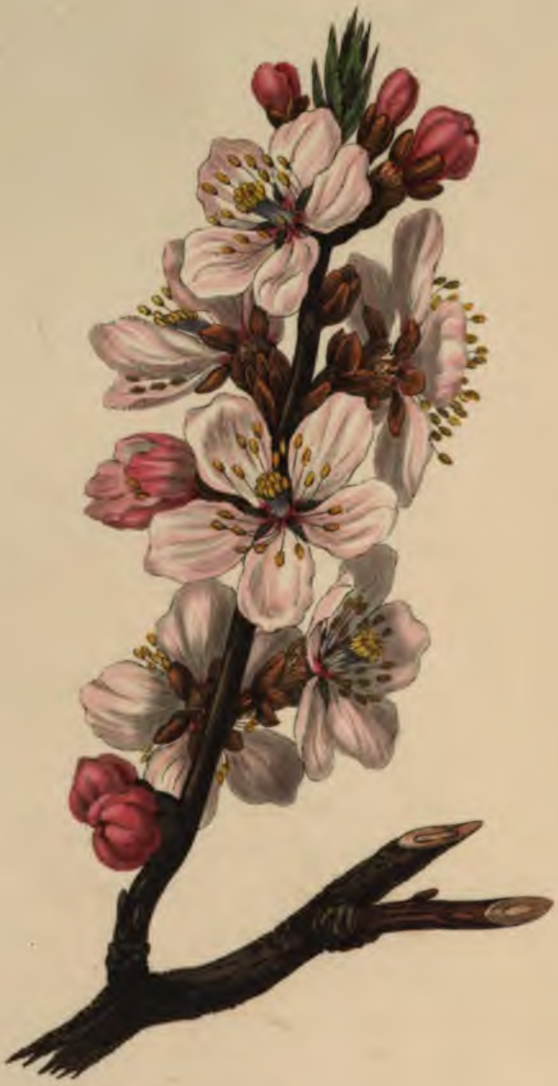
The spring crocus is common in many parts of Europe. In mild seasons it blossoms in February, and its cheerful tints, when contrasted with the yet dreary aspect of nature, make it a welcome visitor. Virgil speaks of it as a flower on which the bees delight to feed, and Milton so far honours it as to give it a place in Paradise.

'Rocked by the chilly blast,
And 'mid the cold snow peeping,
Why do ye deck the waste
When other buds are sleeping?
Did ye, as they,
Awhile delay

Till softer gales were sighing
Perchance no flower
In summer bower
With ye in charms were vying.'

'No fervid beam, 'tis true,
Lady, our slumber breaketh,
From our light cups the dew
No sportive zephyr shaketh;
Heralds of spring,
The wind's rude wing
We cope with at her calling,
And calmly eye
Through darkling sky
The snow-flake thickly falling.

From "lilies of the field,"
Lady, thou'rt taught to borrow
Lessons which well may yield
Assurance for the morrow;
And might we dare
Their task to share,
We'd say, may duty find thee
Prompt at her call,
Whate'er befal,
To act the part assigned thee'



THE ALMOND TREE.

AMYGDALUS COMMUNIS.

"Fleeting and falling
Where is the bloom
Of yon fair almond tree?
It is sunk to the tomb."

This beautiful ornament of our plantations and pleasure grounds is a native of Syria, but now completely naturalized in the South of Europe, and will even perfect its fruit in the more favourable parts of our island. It is, however, as an ornamental tree that it is cultivated here; and its delicate flowers, varying in colour from the fine blush of the apple blossom to a snowy whiteness, and moreover, opening so early in the year, fully entitle it to the estimation in which it is held; but alas! they are as evanescent as they are beautiful, one moment being in their glory, and the next scattered "the breeze best knows where."

Spenser thus alludes to its being the sport of every air that blows :—

> " Like to an almond-tree ymounted hye
> On top of green Selinis all alone,
> With blossoms brave bedecked daintilie,
> Whose tender locks do tremble everie one,
> At everie little breath that under heaven is blown."

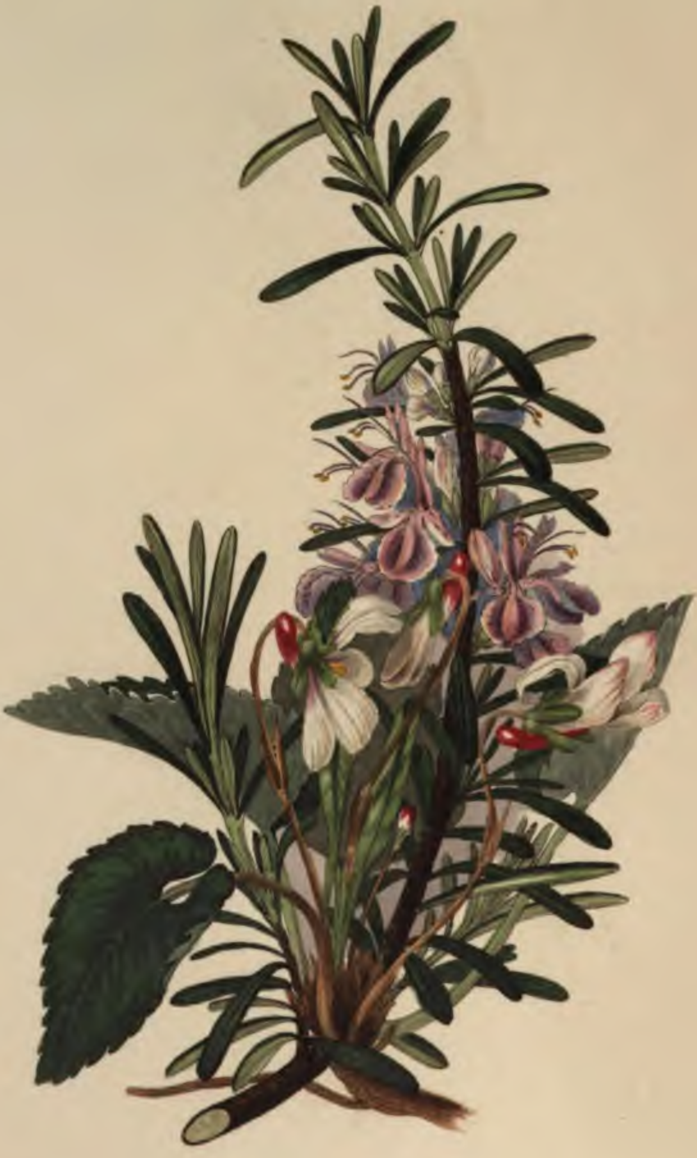
When garnered is pale autumn's sheaf,
And days are gloomy, chill, and brief,
Oh not with wonder, scarce with grief,
We pause to view
The fading flower and seared leaf
Our pathway strew.

But thus to see *thee* bow thy head,
And on the ground thy pale leaves shed,
Ere thy first hour of bloom is sped,
This wakes a sigh ;
For visions of the early dead
Come floating by.

Oh were I from each bud that blows
To choose meet type for beauty's brows,
I'd turn from lily and from rose
To thee, sweet flower;
For that thy leaves in springing close,
Thy life's an hour.

Yes—whether singing to her lute,
Or listening love's beguiling suit,
Or when enlivening harp and flute
Invite the dance;
Thou, frail one, eloquently mute,
Should'st woo her glance.

For whilst upon her bosom white
Thy leaves so perishingly bright
Dropt one by one,—perchance she might
Read beauty's doom;
And learn how e'en a breath may blight
Youth's opening bloom.



THE ROSEMARY AND VIOLET.

THE ROSEMARY.

ROSMARINUS OFFICINALIS.

" There's rosemary, that's for remembrance."

The rosemary is not indigenous, but a native of the South of Europe ; it will however brave our winters if planted in a dry soil and favourable situation. Its common time of flowering is April, but in mild seasons it puts forth its blossoms in March, or even earlier. Henry Kirke White, in one of his most beautiful and plaintive productions, apostrophises it as loving "to bloom on January's front severe;" but this must be a rare circumstance, and rather the exception than the rule.

" The generic name, rosmarinus, is derived from the Latin ros, dew, and marinus, in allusion to its inhabiting the sea coast." " Those," says a distinguished modern traveller, " who have observed it mantling the rocks of the Mediterranean, with its grey flowers glittering with dew, cannot but be struck with the elegant propriety of the name."

Several ancient authors have alluded to the rosemary. "From its smelling like incense they termed it Libanotis; and Coronarius, on account of its being used in garlands." Among our own bards, Shakspeare, who immortalizes every flower he names, under the supposition which in his time generally prevailed that it "comforted the brain and strengthened the memory," besides the passage in Hamlet cited above, makes Perdita say,

———————"Reverend Sirs,
For you there's rosemary and rue; these keep
Seeming and favour all the winter long;
Grace and remembrance be to both of you."

Rue being the herb of grace and rosemary of remembrance.

The qualities attributed to this plant in Shakspeare's day, may account for its being formerly used, with other favourite flowers, at funerals. These offerings to the dead are thus beautifully referred to in Cymbeline—

"Here's a few flowers! but about midnight more:
The herbs that have on them the cold dew o' the night
Are strewings fitt'st for graves————
You were as flowers now withered; even so
These herb'lets shall, which we upon you strew."

In remote villages this custom still holds, for the poor seem to have a sort of practical sentimentalism about them that makes them tenaciously cling to those ancient rites which were once alike common to the palace and the cottage.

Evelyn, in his Sylva, alludes to this practice as a thing of ordinary occurrence in his day. "We adorn their graves," says he, "with flowers and redolent plants, just emblems of the life of man, which has been compared in holy scriptures to those fading beauties, whose roots, being buried in dishonour, rise again in glory."

THE VIOLET.

VIOLA ODORATA.

"Bring violet buds to shed
Around my dying bed
A breath of May, and of the wood's repose."

This universal favourite, in poetry the rival of the rose, is a common indigenous plant, growing not only in most parts of England, but in every country throughout Europe. It is said, also, by some travellers, to be common in the palm groves of Barbary, where the blue and white grow together, and blossom in the winter. Hasselquist found it in Palestine and Japan, and it has been seen to blend its simple beauty with the gorgeous flowers of China, near Canton.

The violet was considered as an emblem of faithfulness, probably from its blossoms being generally blue, which was considered an unchanging colour.

> " Violet is for faithfulness,
> Which in me shall abide;
> Hoping likewise that from your heart
> You will not let it slide."

I have ventured to extend this emblematic character to the white variety, the flowers of which are larger and more fragrant, and thus appropriated it to the dead; and surely its timid beauty and delicate odour seem to render it worthy of this mournful distinction.

Shakspeare makes frequent mention of the violet; he talks of

> " Violets dim,
> But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
> Or Cytherea's breath."

And again.

> "They are gentle
> As zephyrs blowing below the violet,
> Not wagging his sweet head."

But his most happy allusion to it is in that exquisite passage in the Twelfth Night.

> "That strain again; it had a dying fall:
> O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet south
> That breathes upon a bank of violets,
> Stealing and giving odour."

Neither does Milton forget it; it is one of the favoured flowers which strew the bower of Adam and Eve in Paradise.

But much of the imagery of the poets turns on the blue colour of the violet, and as the specimen I have chosen is the white one, happily for one who fears being tedious yet knows not what to reject where all are so beautiful, the field of quotation is narrowed.

Lord Bacon, in his Chapter on Gardens, has brought the violet into most honourable notice.—"That which above all others yields the smell in the air," says he,

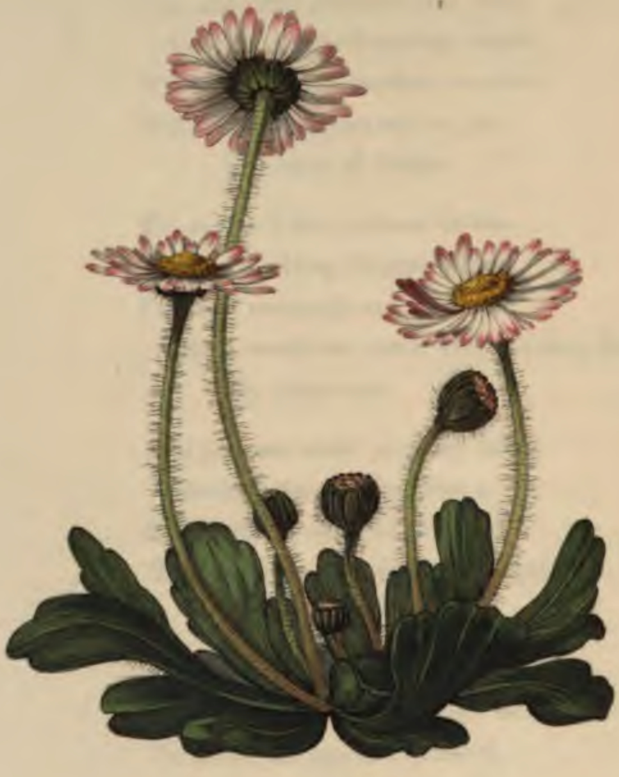
" is the violet, especially the white double violet, which comes twice a year, about the middle of April and about Bartholomew-tide."

Nay, take that gorgeous rose away,
And this bright flaunting wreath;
'Twould seem like mockery to array
With buds so joyous and so gay
The brow of death.

Yet would I that a flower or two
Were shedding fragrance here,
Funereal rosemary and rue—
These would not mock with dazzling hue
My silent tear.

And just one violet you may bring
To deck the sleeping dust;
From winter's sleep awakening,
'Twill whisper of that brighter spring
Which waits the just.

Come, then, and while the passing bell
Says " dust with dust must lie";
To check the agoniz'd farewell,
Do ye of sweet reunion tell,
Beyond the sky.



THE DAISY.

BELLIS PERENNIS.

" There is a flower, a little flower,
With silver crest and golden eye,
That welcomes every changing hour,
And weathers every sky.

It smiles upon the lap of May,
To sultry August spreads its charms,
Lights pale October on his way,
And twines December's arms."

The simple notice of the botanist, that the daisy grows "in pastures and meadows every where,"* is alone sufficient to establish its claim on our regard. It is not merely a spring or summer friend, dying with its favourite season ; it demands no peculiarities of soil or situation, it meets us *every where*, and attends us through the year, for it is often seen blossoming in the midst of winter. Thus Wordsworth addresses it—

" When soothed awhile by milder airs,
Thee winter in the garland wears

---

* Sir J. E. Smith.

That thinly shades his few grey hairs;
Spring cannot shun thee;
Whole summer fields are thine by right,
And autumn, melancholy wight,
Doth in thy crimson head delight,
When rains are on thee."

For this, not less than for its simple cheerful beauty,

" It is indeed by many a claim
The poet's darling,"

and truly, from Chaucer downward, all the tuneful race have given it "honour due."

It seems the peculiar delight of the earlier poets; they comment on all its beauties and habits, they play with its name, and the profuseness with which it is showered around makes them consider it the grand favourite of nature.

Drayton, in his description of the various flowers composing the bridal wreath of the river Tame, tells us,

" The daisy over all these sundry sweets so thick
As nature doth herself, to imitate her right
Who seems in that, her pearl, so greatly to delight
That every plain therewith she powdereth."

Milton leads us most willing captives to

> “ Russet lawns and fallows grey
> Where the nibbling flocks do stray,
> Meadows trim with daisies pied,
> Shallow brooks and rivers wide.”

It would be unpardonable to conclude without one allusion to the Bard who seems to have made the “ wee crimson-tipped flower” his own, by the exquisitely simple lines he has addressed to it.

Art thou wakened already and decking the green?
How transient and light has thy winter sleep been ;
But thou art not of them which shrink back in dismay,
If the season be adverse, or darkling the day.

As the lark amongst birds when it chaunts its blythe
strain,
As the lamb when it sports ’mid the flocks of the plain,
Such art thou amongst flowers, the blythest of all,
On which sunbeams are shining, or dew-drops do fall.

THE PRIMROSE.

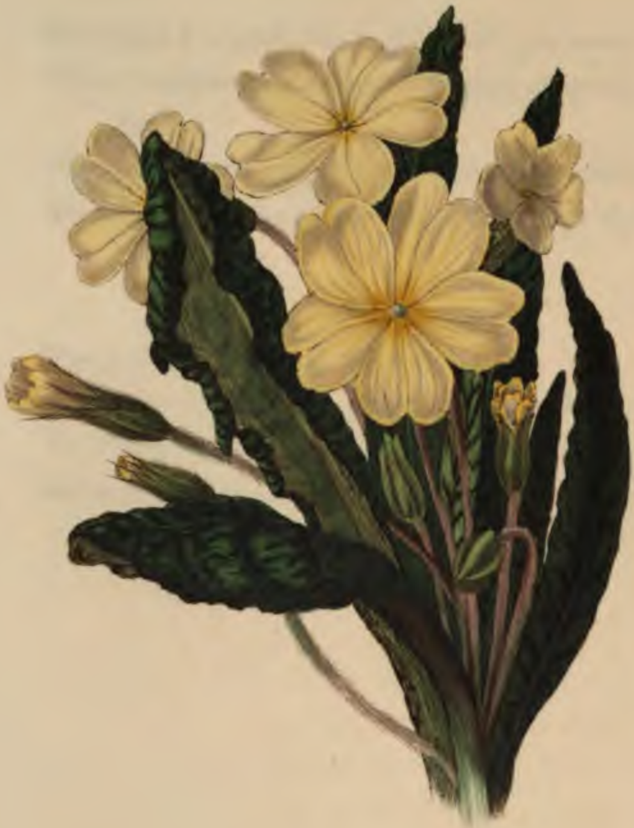
PRIMULA VULGARIS.

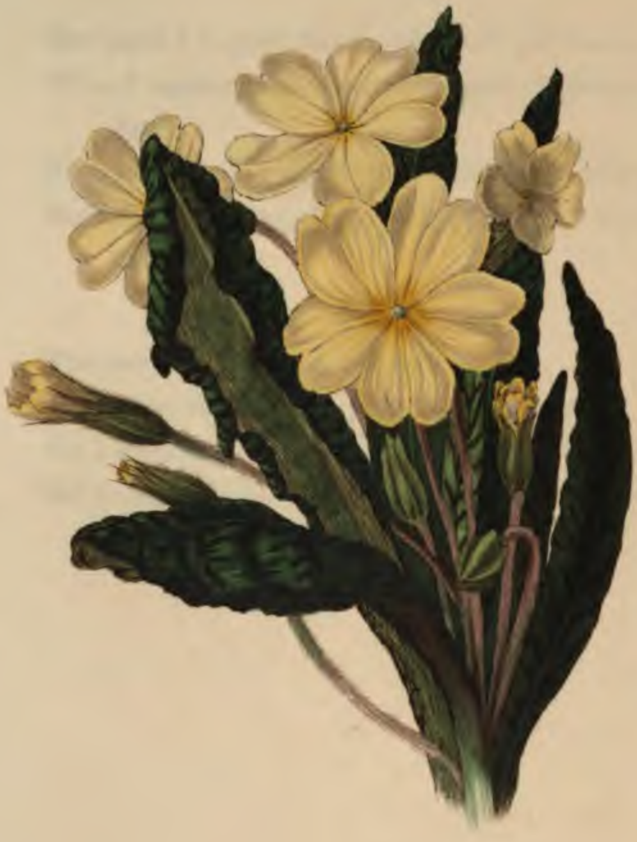
ring of a dark and sullen sire,
form, so delicately fine,
ursed in whirling storms
dled by the winds.

ing spring first question'd winter's sway,
turdy blusterer to the fight,
bank he threw
victory.”

nd so pleasing are the associations
early spring flowers, that even some,
these might be considered as homely
ature's handywork, stand high in our
eem to possess “ something than beauty
t the primrose is not only rich in associations
urite of our infancy, the herald of advancing
ut is gifted with such delicacy of form, colour,
grance, as make it almost independent of every
harm.

‘The botanic name, primula, is derived from
us, first, prime, or early, and hence prime-rose





THE PRIMROSE.

PRIMULA VULGARIS.

" Mild offspring of a dark and sullen sire,
Whose modest form, so delicately fine,
Was nursed in whirling storms
And cradled by the winds.

Thee, when young spring first question'd winter's sway,
And dared the sturdy blusterer to the fight,
Thee on this bank he threw
To mark his victory."

So many and so pleasing are the associations connected with early spring flowers, that even some, which but for these might be considered as homely specimens of nature's handywork, stand high in our favour, and seem to possess " something than beauty dearer." But the primrose is not only rich in associations as the favourite of our infancy, the herald of advancing spring, but is gifted with such delicacy of form, colour, and fragrance, as make it almost independent of every other charm.

" The botanic name, primula, is derived from *primus*, first, prime, or early, and hence prime-rose contracted into primrose"; and though in fact this flower is preceded by the snowdrop and crocus, yet, on the least encouragement from sun and wind, it blossoms very early, seeming anxious to appear amongst the first that "tell us tales about the spring." Except the daisy, no flower, perhaps, more touchingly recalls the days of our childhood. Who does not remember the time when he

> "Robbed every primrose-root he met,
> And ofttimes got the root to set;
> And joyful home each nosegay bore,
> And felt—as he will feel no more."

From the paleness of its hue, and its growing in groves and shady situations, it is generally in poetry invested with a mournful character.

Milton says, "Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies;" and Shakspeare, in the Winter's Tale, speaks of

> ———————— "Pale primroses
> That die unmarried ere they behold
> Bright Phœbus in his strength."

Might I differ from such high authorities, its retiring beauty, and its love of "dingle and bushy dell," would rather lead me to consider it as a fit emblem of modesty and humility.

Fairest of all that's fair
In nature's works are ye, ye wilding flowers,
When thus, at spring's first beck, ye blythely rear
Your shining heads, to herald her bright hours.

But that your bloom is brief,
And here and there on some slight stem a thorn,
Half hid, perchance, beneath a shrivelled leaf,
Tells unto what sad destiny ye're born;

I could have thought the doom
Which gave to ruin earth, to storms the sky,
And man, God's last best work, unto the tomb,
Your primal beauty had unharmed passed by.

But are ye loved the less
That for our sakes these earth-born traits ye wear?
Oh no! the very blight which mars your grace,
And speaks your frailty, makes ye but more dear.

Nor this your only claim
On man's regard; meekly from glade and bower
Ye warn and counsel him, as 'twere your aim
To win him back to paradise once more.

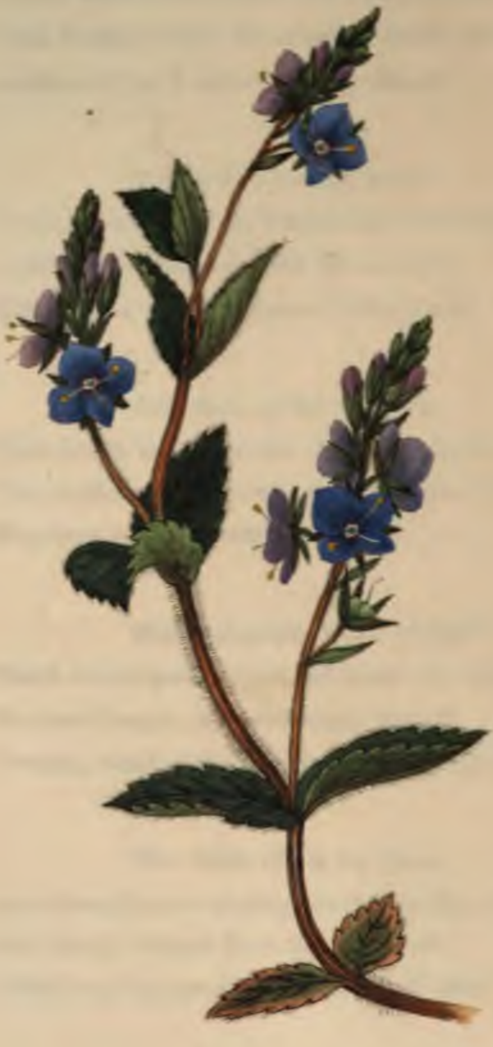
Yes, each of ye in turn
Points some pure moral to the human heart;
One, bending 'neath the storm, to those who mourn
Lessons of meek endurance may impart;

Others that breathe at eve
Sweet incense, urge to watchfulness and prayer;
And, with united voice, *all* bid us leave
The morrow to our common Father's care.

And thou, so fair and pale,
That lovest 'mid grass and shadowing leaves to hide
Thy modest charms, sweet primrose, thee I hail,
Reprover meek of vanity and pride.

Alas that pride, which wrought
Man's woe in paradise, should haunt him still,
No hated inmate, but with every thought
Twined, closely twined, and prompting aye to ill.

Oh! when within my breast
Such thoughts are stirring, do thou gently chide,
And timely whisper from thy leafy nest,
'Shall man be proud, to sin and death allied?'



THE SPEEDWELL.

VERONICA CHAMÆDRYS.

"Blue thou art, intensely blue!
Flower, whence came thy dazzling hue?—
When I opened first my eye
Upward glancing to the sky,
Straightway from the firmament
Was the sapphire's brilliance sent."

Few wild, or indeed cultivated, flowers are more beautiful than the speedwell. Its hue is so transparent, and its general character so light and elegant, that it might form a fitting garland for a fairy. In the English Flora it is said "to be by some mistaken for the myosotis palustris, the German forget-me-not; it may, however, vie in beauty with the true one." Its leaves have been considered a good substitute for tea, especially in Germany and Sweden, and it has obtained from the French the name of Thè de l'Europe.

Though so beautiful and so profusely scattered,

"In every lane and every alley green
Dingle and bushy dell
And every bosky bourn from side to side,"

I am not aware that it figures much in poetry; Spenser, however, is supposed to allude to it under the name of astrophel, in compliment to Sir Philip Sidney.

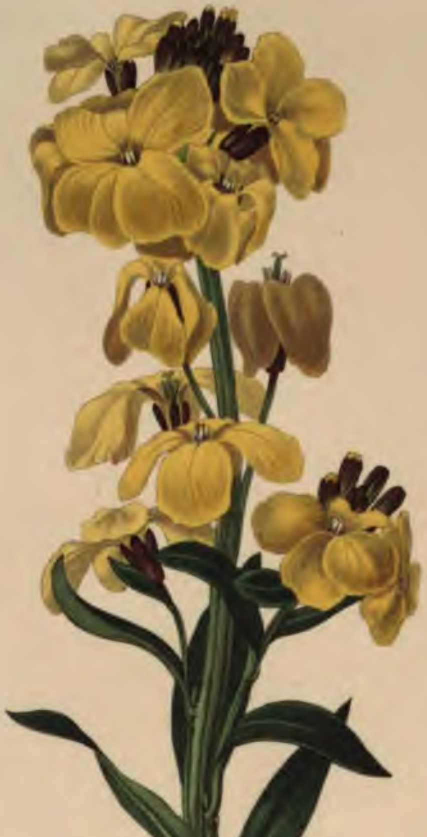
The following interesting anecdote connected with this flower is recorded by Schimmelpenninck.

Rousseau, in his earliest and happiest days, was enjoying in company with a friend the lovely scenery surrounding Geneva. As they were commenting on the various objects of attraction which gave a charm to the landscape, his companion pointed to a bed of the veronica chamædrys, remarking that its cheerful beauty accorded well with the scene. At a later period of his life the philosopher again visited Geneva, and again rambled to the very spot which had charmed him thirty years before. His name had now become the very watchword of literature and philosophy, "falsely so called," but fame was all he had reaped—he was a stranger to happiness. The prospect he was surveying was as lovely as ever, but he felt that he was changed though nature was not; the world had deceived his youthful expectations, the past was a troubled dream, the future had nothing in store for him. Whilst thus musing, he cast his eye on the same tuft of speedwell, it was blooming as cheerily as before, but the friend who had first directed his attention to it was no more. It was too much for him—sick at heart, he turned away and wept.

Not for thy azure tint though bright,
Or form so elegantly light
I single thee, thou lovely flower,
From others of the sylvan bower;
Thou hast a spell to them unknown,
And this my heart hath captive won.

Thy name, what is't? The very prayer
Affection breathes for friends most dear;
Whate'er their pursuits, hopes, or aim,
Part they or meet, thy magic name
With silent eloquence may tell
Her soul's fond breathings, "Speed ye well."

Then to thy task, thou favoured flower,
And, if thy simple charms have power
To win the glance of her I love,
Oh faithful to thy errand prove;
Say, far or near, where'er she dwell,
My prayer shall ever be, "Speedwell."



THE WILD WALL-FLOWER.

CHEIRANTHUS FRUTICULOSUS.

"Flower of the solitary place,
Grey ruin's golden crown;
That lendest melancholy grace,
To haunts of old renown.
Thou mantlest o'er the battlement
By strife or storm decayed;
And fillest up each envious rent
Time's canker-tooth hath made."

The wild wall-flower, though not distinguished by the richness and variety of tint peculiar to the garden species, which Thompson describes as "stained with iron brown," is yet by no means destitute of attractions, being of a bright yellow, and sweet scented. It grows on old walls and ruins, hence its name; and but for its unpretending aspect, fancy might deem it chose such situations in mockery of human grandeur. It blossoms in April and May, and from its choice of abode it comes

"With fascination to the heart addressed," and seems to pour forth a rich strain of morality to those who have an ear for the lessons of nature.

" It is owing, perhaps, to the artificial combination of various materials that many vegetables grow on and around ruined fortifications and castles, among whose relics the botanist finds frequent objects of interest: the campanula nods on the battlement, and the wall-flower gives her odours to the breeze as it sighs around the lonely pile which had once echoed only to the voice of cheerfulness and revelry. The works of man are ever going to decay; those of nature are in perpetual renovation."

" The weed is green when grey the wall
And blossoms rise where turrets fall."

What various turns of chance and fate
This mouldering pile has known ;
What rude magnificence and state
Within its halls were shewn,
When " crowds of knights" and ladies gay
" In weeds of peace" kept holiday.

These walls, where now with softening grace
The ivy-wreath is flung,
With trophies once of war and chace
Were thick and proudly hung;
But helmet, spear, and horn, are gone
T' augment the dust we tread upon.

Full oft this cell in weary thrall
Hath lonely captive held,
And these proud towers the whizzing ball
Like granite rock repelled;
But ah ! they fall and crumble now,
Beneath a stronger, mightier foe.

Time, time his withering hand hath laid
On battlement and tower,
And where rich banners were displayed,
Now only waves a flower;
List, and 'twill fitting comment read
On revel gay, and martial deed.

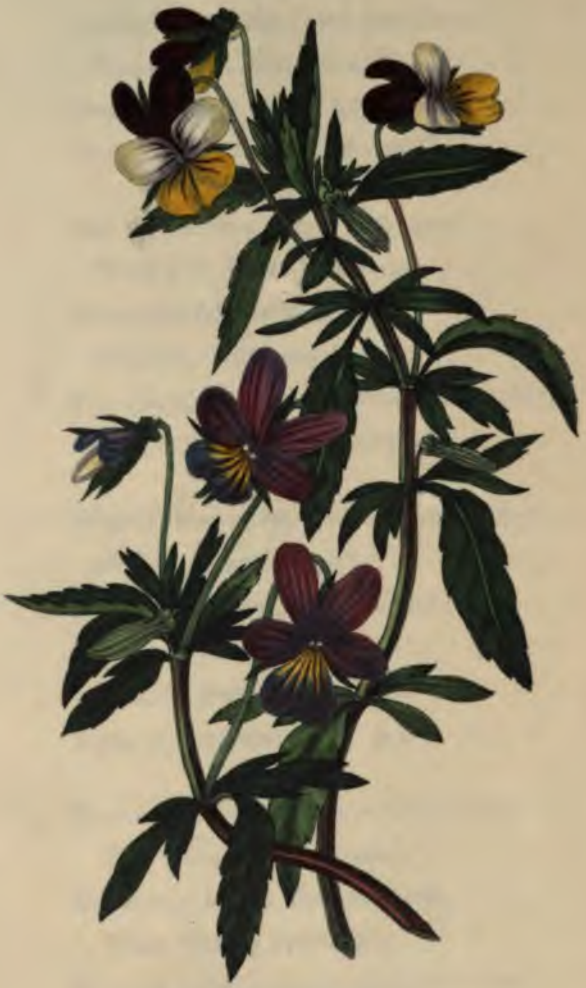
' Mute is the warden's challenge, mute
The warrior's hasty tread,
And tuneless is the lady's lute,
For she is with the dead;
And but a flower now mourns the doom
Of prostrate strength, and faded bloom.

Read, stranger, in this ruin's fate
An emblem true of life;
Conflicting passions, love, and hate,
Joy, sorrow, fear, and strife,
Combine, alas! in one dark plan
To storm the "citadel of man."

And should they fail, a foe is near
Who ne'er defeat hath known;
Time ever follows in the rear,
He wills,—the work is done;
For where's the beauty, strength, or pride,
Have e'er his withering touch defied.

Wear'st thou to-day the wreath of fame?
O heed it, heed it not;
A few brief years, thy place and name
May be alike forgot,
And but a lowly flow'ret wave
Upon thy unremembered grave.

Here ends the semblance,—never more
This ruined pile shall rise;
But man a seraph blest shall soar,
When what is mortal dies,
If, while earth's changing paths he trod,
His heart and hopes were fixed on God.'



THE HEARTSEASE OR PANSY VIOLET.

VIOLA TRICOLOR.

And "Thou, so rich in gentle names, appealing
To hearts that own our nature's common lot;
Thou, styled by sportive Fancy's better feeling,
"A Thought"—the Heartsease."

Besides adorning our own meadows, this favourite little flower grows in many parts of Europe, and is also a native of Siberia and Japan. There are many varieties, the larger ones of which only are odorous. No flower was ever gifted with so many names; to enumerate them would be a somewhat tedious task, but surely the very multiplicity speaks the estimation in which it is held Its more usual applications are Heartsease and Pansy, the latter a corruption of the French penseé; as such, it forms part of Ophelia's mournful wreath ;

——"There is pansies,
That's for thoughts"

The "pansy freaked with jet"—is also one of the flowers which Milton culls for the bier of Lycidas.

“Love in Idleness” is another name it assumes, and under that title it is immortalized by Shakspeare in that exquisite passage in the Midsummer Night's Dream, familiar to every reader. Its being held sacred to St. Valentine may have obtained for it this distinction.

This morn a fairy bower I passed,
Where sheltered from the northern blast,
Grew many a garden gem;
More lovely sure not Eden graced,
Ere yet the primal curse had traced
Ruin and blight on all, and placed
Thorns on the roses stem.

But nearer viewed, methought the bloom,
Ev'n of this group, partook the doom
Which all things earthly share;
In one, the gayest of the gay,
A hidden worm insidious lay,
Whilst others born far, far away,
Pined for their native air.

Onward I sped in musing mood,
Till near my path, now wild and rude,
A flow'ret met my view;
Unlike to those I'd left, it chose
A lowly bed, "yet blythe as rose
That in the king's own garden grows,"
It sipt the morning dew.

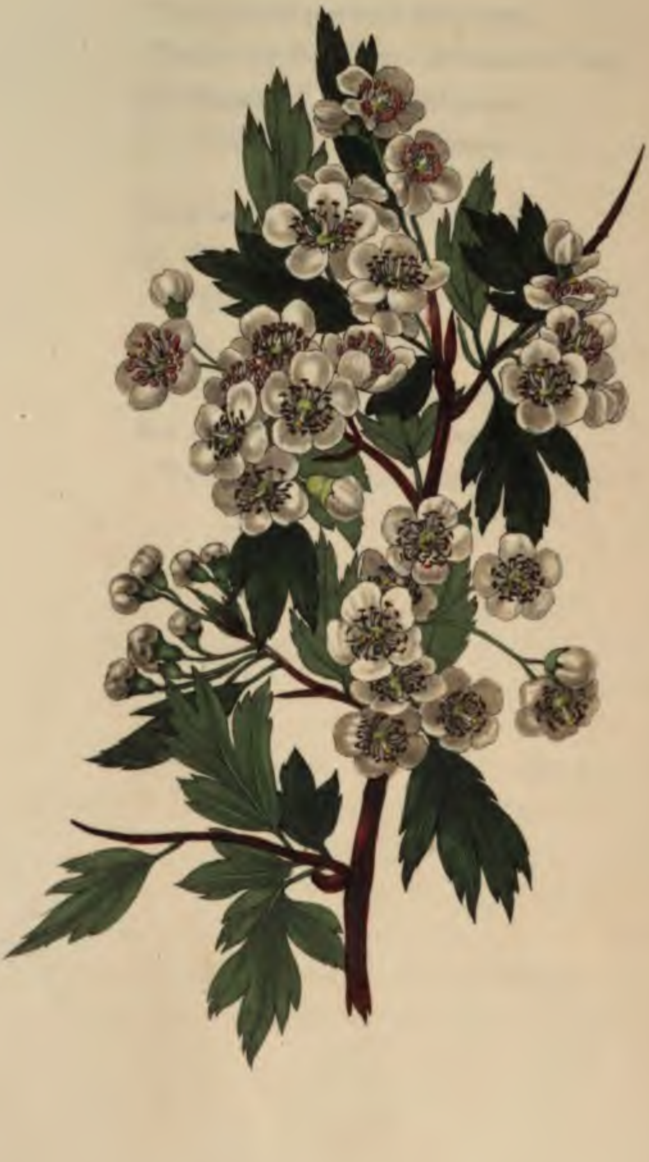
I paused, the sky became oercast,
And the chill rain fell thick and fast,—
How fared that blossom now?
With head on its slight stem inclined,
Smiling it met both rain and wind,
As if to teach me it designed
'Neath sorrows storm to bow.

Its name I knew, and deemed full well,
From its low home in rugged dell
It might this hint afford,
That, whilst exotics only flower
In cultured soil, and sheltered bower,
Heartsease may be alike the dower
Of peasant and of lord.

Yea, brows may ache which wear a crown,
And palace walls give back the groan

Of breaking hearts I ween,
Whilst in the peasant's lowly nest,
That, which fair Eden's shades once blest,
Oft lingers still a cherished guest,
Cheering life's varied scene.

Then let the storm beat o'er my head,
If, while the rugged path I tread,
That "ease of heart" be mine,
Which, when the darkling cloud doth rise,
Not with the passing sunbeam dies,
But all unchanged by frowning skies,
Throughout the storm doth shine.



THE HAWTHORN OR MAY.

CRATŒGUS OXYACANTHA.

"Amongst the many buds proclaiming May,
(Decking the fields in holiday's array
Striving who shall surpasse in braverie)
Marke the faire blooming of the hawthorne tree;
Who finely cloathed in a robe of white
Feeds full the wanton eye with May's delight."

Soon as "the hawthorn whitens" we know that spring is in its zenith, and looking around we realize the vivid picture of the poet—

"And see the country far diffused around,
One boundless blush, one white-empurpled shower
Of mingled blossoms, where the raptured eye
Hurries from joy to joy; and, hid beneath
The fair profusion, yellow autumn spies."

Various species of hawthorn are common in different lands, but our own may surely vie with any in beauty and fragrance. It has also another charm; concealed in its flowery recesses, the little birds "warble their native woodnotes wild," and seem as if they would repay it for their winter's sustenance by the richness and variety of their strains.

The sight of this tree in full bloom seems always to suggest pastoral images. It may be that the poets, who first imbibe and then strengthen any association or fancy peculiar to their nation, have generally invested it with this character. Thus Milton says,

"And every shepherd tells his tale.
Under the hawthorn in the dale."

And Shakspeare in Henry the Sixth.

"Gives not a hawthorn bush a sweeter shade
To shepherds looking on their silly sheep,
Than doth a rich embroidered canopy
To kings that fear their subjects' treachery."

Formerly on May-day, at Whitsuntide, and at Christmas, houses, and even churches, were profusely decorated with flowers or evergreens peculiar to the season. This custom is still preserved at Christmas, when every temple and every window boasts its sprig of holly; and in some places May-day is thus appropriately ushered in, the hawthorn blossom being substituted for the evergreen.

There is a white variety which blooms at Christmas "on an eminence called Weary-all-hill, which monkish writers inform us derived this appropriate name from St. Joseph and his companions resting here once when much fatigued, during their pious mission in England, for the purpose of preaching the Christian faith. Here it is recorded the good saint fixed his staff in the earth and ever after it put forth its blossoms on Christmas day. It had, we are informed, two distinct trunks till the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when one of them was destroyed by a puritan; the other met with the same fate during the great rebellion. The blossoms of this tree were esteemed such great curiosities as to become an object of gain to the merchants of Bristol, who not only disposed of them to the inhabitants of their own city, but exported them to different parts of Europe. The probable truth is, that it was brought from Palestine, by some of the pilgrims, there being a species of thorn, a native of that country, which blooms at Christmas."

They tell me storms o'er life do lour,
They tell me man to grief is born;
But I have ranged through mead and bower,

Still asking, as I culled the flower,
Where lurks the thorn ?

Avowal sweet of youth's blythe day !
Made only ere the heart is torn ;
Ah ! who in after years can say,
With smile incredulously gay,
Where lurks the thorn ?

How true a type this hawthorn bough
Of youthful dreams in life's first morn ;
So thick the fragrant blossoms grow,
What curious eye detects below
The frequent thorn ?

But wait a few brief days, and soon
That bough, of all its glory shorn,
Its fragrance spent, its blossoms gone,
Will to thine eye shew, one by one,
Each pointed thorn.

Thus crowned with light and linked with flowers
Seems life, in youth's enchanting morn ;
But soon, how soon, the tempest lours,
And, stripping fancy's fairy bowers,
Lays bare the thorn !

THE IVY.

HEDERA HELIX.

" Oh! how could fancy crown with *thee*,
In ancient days the god of wine,
And bid thee at the banquet be,
Companion of the vine?
Thy home, wild plant, is where each sound
Of revelry hath long been o'er,
Where song's full notes once pealed around,
But now are heard no more."

We may indeed wonder with the writer of these sweet lines, that the ivy should be desecrated to such unhallowed purposes. Besides the consideration of its usual haunts, there is something so sombre in its appearance as makes it seem but little akin to revelry. One might almost imagine that in wreathing the goblet with its graceful branches, garnished with bright but poisonous berries, it was designed to point a moral by alluding to " the sweet poison of misused wine."

We are indebted to the ivy for the picturesque beauty it throws around every object to which it attaches itself; no architectural ornament, however classical, no tracery, however light and elegant, can vie in graceful effect with this "wild tapestry." But not only is the eye indebted to it; the imagination also shares in the obligation for the touching imagery it supplies. Springing wherever there is ruin and decay, it decks indiscriminately "the loftiest height" and "the humblest grave"—and that with such exquisite grace that we doubt whether Adam, to whom his fair consort (according to the poet) assigned the task of directing "the clasping ivy where to climb," could have twined it more tastefully.

Have you e'er seen the moon's soft splendour
  Sleep peaceful on some ruined pile,
Gilding, with radiance mild and tender,
  Each broken arch and mouldering aisle?

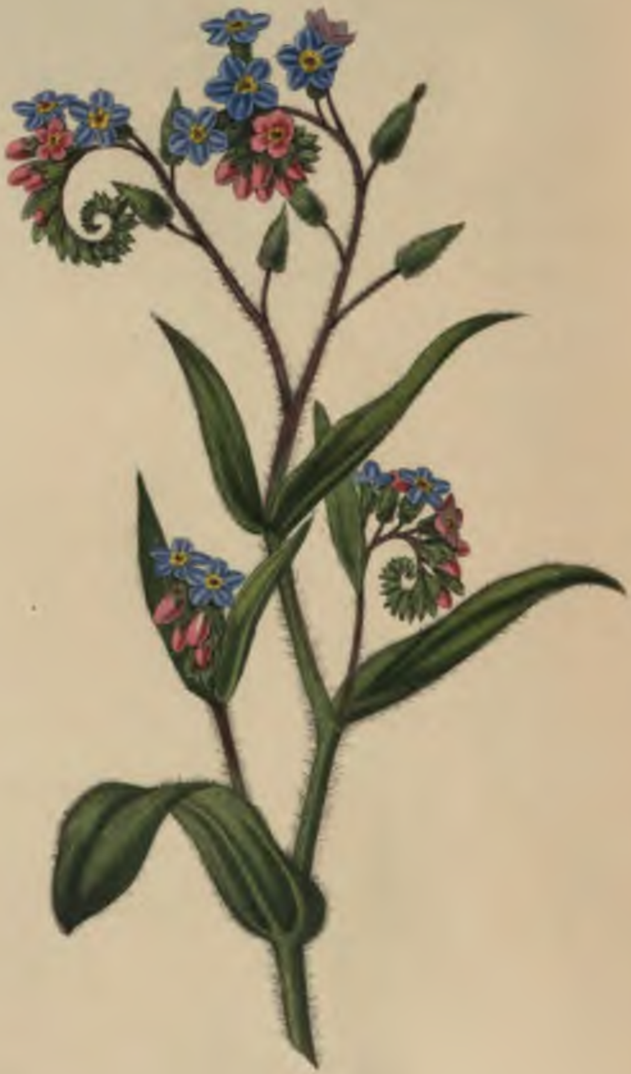
Have you e'er seen the ivy clinging,
  Round fragments broken and decayed,
As if its mantling wreaths 'twere flinging,
  To hide the breaches time had made?

Oh! thus, should care or sorrow wound thee,
  Be friendships soft endearments thine,
And fondest sympathy around thee
  As close her thousand tendrils twine.

And when, at last, each youthful token
Shall yield to wasting and decay,
And thou, like arch or column broken,
Shalt feel proud manhood's strength give way;

Oh! then may love, by time unshaken,
Around its earliest prop still cling,
(For when was mouldering arch forsaken
By the fond wreath it caused to spring?)

Still may one smile, as moonbeam tender,
E'en to the last unwearied shine,
Gilding thy manhood's waning splendour,
And oh may that one smile be mine!



THE FORGET-ME-NOT.

MYOSOTIS PALUSTRIS.

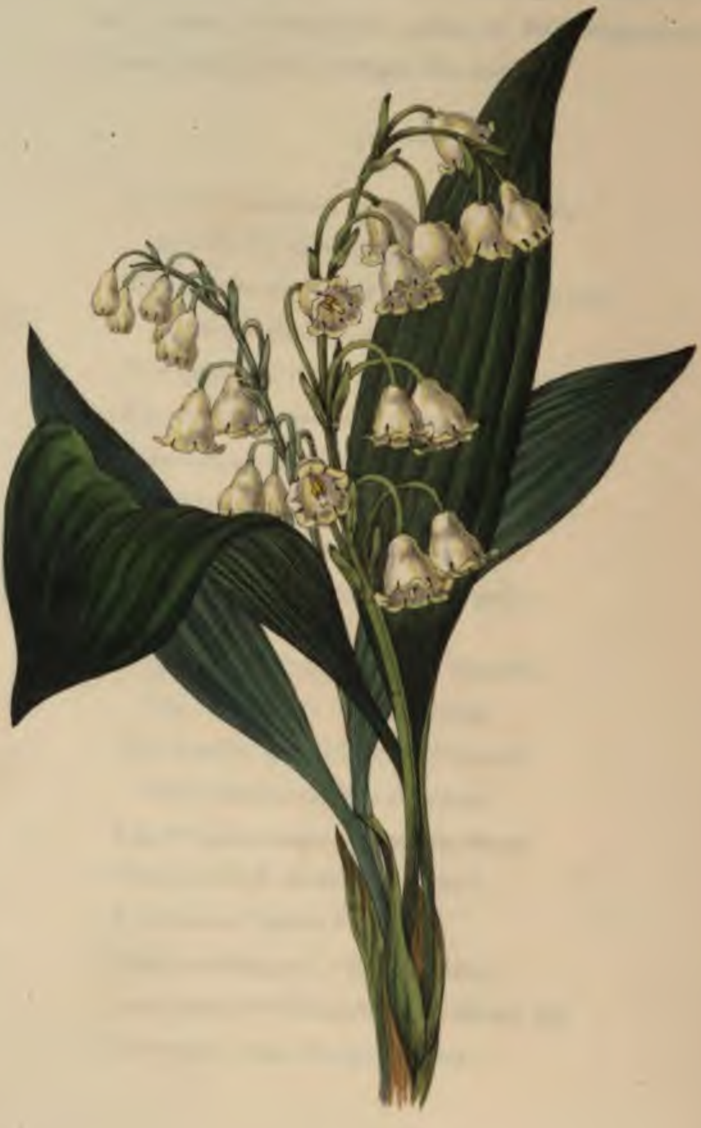
" This is affection's tribute, friendship's offering,
Whose silent eloquence, more rich than words,
Tells of the giver's faith and truth in absence,
And says, " Forget-me-not."

" This most elegant plant, the ' Forget-me-not,' or emblem of affection among the Germans, is the most distinct and best-known example of its genus, though too long confounded with other common species." Whilst examining its minute and delicate beauty, one might almost wish for a " microscopic eye." Its colour is somewhat paler and less transparent than that of the Germander speedwell, and reminds us of the tint of the Torquoise, or the soft "peculiar blue" of an autumnal sky.

Its beauty and its name conjointly render it, one may almost regret to say, the fashionable favourite of the day, as the very idea seems to detract something from its quiet simplicity. It is introduced into every album, scrap-book, &c. and the first crude efforts of the early muse are usually in praise of the Forget-me-not. I must plead guilty amongst the rest.

In vain I searched the garden through,
In vain the meadow gay,
For some sweet flower which might to you
A kindly thought convey.
One spake too much of hope and bloom
For those who know of man the doom;
Another, queen of the parterre,
Thorns on her graceful stem did bear;
A third, alas! seemed all too frail
For ruder breath than summer gale.

I turned me thence to where beneath
The hedgerow's verdant shade,
The lowliest gems of Flora's wreath
Their modest charms displayed.
Lured by its name, one simple flower
From its meek sisterhood I bore,
And bade it hasten to impart
The breathings of a faithful heart,
And plead—" Whate'er your future lot,
In weal or woe—Forget-me-not."



THE LILY OF THE VALLEY.

CONVALLARIA MAGALIS.

——————" And ye whose lowlier pride
In sweet seclusion seems to shrink from view,
You of the valley named, no longer hide
Your blossoms meet to twine the brow of chastest bride."

In expatiating on the charms of flowers, each one as it passes under review, seems for the moment to monopolize to itself the various perfections of its different competitors; but on a more discriminating survey, after comparing one with another, we find each has its own peculiar claim on our regard. Amongst those, however, which are distinguished for timid loveliness and delicate odour, it must be confessed

" No flower amid the garden fairer grows
Than the sweet lily of the lowly vale."

What so beautiful as these " pearl-white bells," peeping between the ample green leaves; and how strictly accordant is its delicate perfume with its shrinking nun-like beauty ! Altogether it seems

———" Chaste as the icicle
Which hangs on Dian's temple."

Who has not longed on a warm spring day,

" When the sun
Shakes from his noon-day throne the scattering clouds,
To seek the bank where flowering elders crowd,
And, scattered wild, the lily of the vale
Its balmy essence breathes" ?

" There are varieties with double, or with purple flowers, sometimes seen in gardens, but not of easy cultivation and far less elegant than the wild kind, which is among the most favourite of our native flowers."

I believe I have taken a poetical license in choosing this lily as the one alluded to by our Saviour, when he said " consider the lilies of the field how they grow.' There is a note in Hartwell Horne's introduction to the critical study and knowledge of the holy scriptures to this effect, vol. iii. p. 63. " In this passage (Matthew vi. 28,) Jesus Christ is commonly supposed to have referred to the white lily or to the tulip, but neither of these grows wild in Palestine. It is natural to presume that according to his usual custom, he called the attention of his hearers to some object at hand; and as the fields of the Levant are overrun with the amaryllis lutea, whose golden liliaceous flowers, in autumn, afford one of the most brilliant and gorgeous objects in nature, the expression of "Solomon in all his glory not being arrayed like one of these" is peculiarly appropriate." This, be it remembered, is but conjecture. Should I however be in error I have at least the countenance of an elegant writer (not perhaps in choosing this *species* of lily,) who, speaking of the moral which flowers may impart, says,

> "Nor can such touching illustrations fail,
> When thus the Saviour preached, his text the lilies pale."

Thou whose sad and darkling brow
Seems to tell of care and woe,
Dost thou pore upon the cloud
Which futurity doth shroud,
And thy trembling fancy fill
With anticipated ill?

Ask the lilies of the field
For the lessons they can yield;
Lo! they neither spin nor toil,
Yet how cheerily they smile.
In such beautiful array,
Solomon, in by-gone day,
Decked in Ophir's gold and gem,
Could not equal one of them.
Hark! to fancy's listening ear
Thus they whisper soft and clear—
'Heaven-appointed teachers we,
Mortal, thus would counsel thee:
Gratefully enjoy to-day,
If the sun vouchsafe his ray;
If the darkling tempest lour,
Meekly bend beneath the shower;
But oh leave to-morrow's fare
To thy heavenly father's care.
Does each day upon its wing
Its allotted burden bring?
Load it not besides with sorrow
Which belongeth to the morrow.
Strength is promised, strength is given,
When the heart by God is riven;
But foredate the hour of woe,

And alone thou bear'st the blow.
One thing only claims thy care,
Seek thou first, by faith and prayer,
That all-glorious world above,
Scene of righteousness and love,
And whate'er thou need'st below
He thou trustest will bestow.'

THE DAME'S VIOLET.

HESPERIS MATRONALIS.

" Call it not wasted, the scent we lend
To the breeze, when no step is nigh;
O thus for ever the earth should send
Her grateful breath on high."

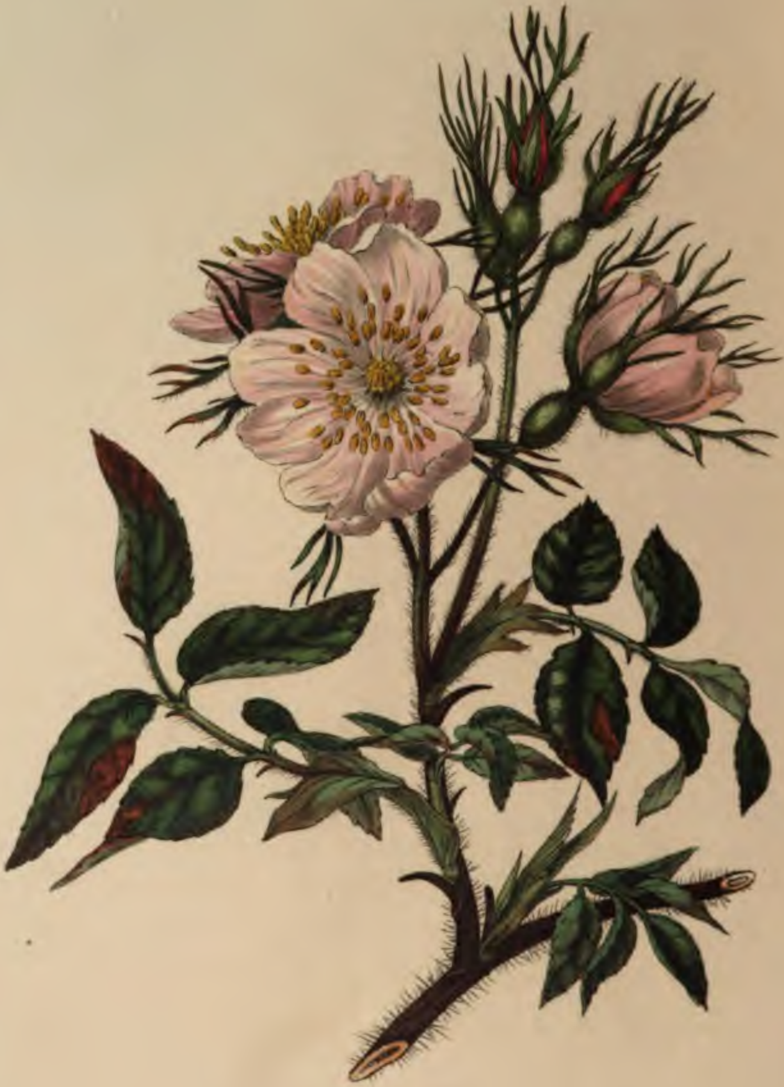
" This flower is rather large and handsome, pale purple, or white, perpetually varying from seed in this respect. By day they have little or no smell, except in rainy weather; but in an evening they are highly and delightfully fragrant. Few British plants have been enveloped in more uncertainty than this, owing to the epithet inodora, which, as botanists generally hunt by daylight, was found inapplicable to our wild hesperis; while the well-known rich nocturnal fragrance of the garden plant, dedicated in its name for that very reason to the evening star, was supposed to render the latter specifically distinct." "It is said that hesperis matronalis, originally brought by European settlers to the United States of America, loses its scent the second season, and is obliged to be renewed by fresh seeds from Europe." *Sir J. E. Smith.*

" This plant is much cultivated in gardens for the fragrance of its flowers, which induces the ladies in Germany to keep it in pots in their apartments, whence it obtained the name of Dame's violet."

Yes, 'tis sweet evening's hour !
I know each signal well—
The dying strains in brake and bower,
The freshening breeze, the closing flower,
These all her coming tell.
Yea, now she flings
From her soft wings
A shade as sweet and sad as round past pleasures clings.

And thou, oh flow'ret fair !
That aye, at set of sun,
Dost yield those sweets withheld from day,
Art greeting now yon star's pure ray
With fragrant orison ;
And fancy deems
The dew that gleams
Upon thy breast is more than at the first it seems.

All nature hath one voice,
One theme, and that how blest !
From stars of heaven high notes that swell,
To flowers that ope in lonely dell
Their incense-breathing breast ;
All, all upraise
One burst of praise,
And call aloud on man to join his loftier lays.



THE DOG-ROSE.

ROSA CANINA.

————————" Impervious grows the briar
Covered with thorns and roses, mingled like
Pleasures and pains, but shedding richly forth
Its fragrance on the air."

If the lily of the valley conveys the idea of cloistered purity, the wild rose may as fitly represent that which escapes unsullied from the trying contact of every day life.

Its blossoms open in June, and through this and the following month it " bears its blushing honours thick upon it," and is as truly the acknowledged and prime favourite of our hedgerows and thickets, as the cultivated species are of the gay parterre. When beholding the first rose of the season, who but recalls the time when he bore off the prize with no ordinary pleasure, esteeming it the choicest flower of his simple nosegay. It is indeed full of early associations, and could we "speak in numbers" this seems the very language in which we should address it in riper years:

"Yes: gazing on thee now,
Those scenes beloved can memory draw
When simple childhood's hat of straw
Shaded my careless brow:
And round it clustered many a wreath
Of blossoms wild and sweet as thou,
And lighter was the heart beneath
Than it is now."

Some authors imagine that it was from this shrub the crown of thorns was made; be that as it may, the thoughtful wanderer, whilst viewing its beauty and inhaling its fragrance, will not forget that

"Many a moral hangs upon its thorn;"

and he will find other feelings than those of admiration insensibly mingle with his contemplations. It does, indeed, read a fitting comment on earthly pleasures. We have still on earth " flowers of all hue," but we cannot add,

————" And without thorn the rose."

Gem of the bower, sweet rose! the fairest, brightest
Of the gay tribes which drink the summer beam,
Unchanged thou seem'st, and still my eye delightest,
When other joys are passing as a dream.
Oh! with each breath that fills the zephyr's wing,
How much of early feeling seems to spring!

Nor do I feel, when in my breast I wear thee,
Thy scent and beauty form thy only spell;
To sober thought thy very thorns endear thee,
For wholesome are the solemn truths they tell;
Traits of the fall, they seem, sweet flower, to thee,
What care and grief are to humanity.

Come then, fair monitress, and let me borrow
Hints which may serve for life's aye changing hour,
Is grief my lot? tell how unmixed His sorrow,
Who laid aside for us his crown and wore,

Not, as doth man, alternate thorn and rose,
But thorns, thorns only, on His bleeding brows.

And if, when pleasures smile, thou e'er shouldst find me
With trusting fondness cling too much to them,
Then, gentle teacher, once again remind me
By the sharp thorns which fence thy graceful stem,
That heaven alone unchanging pleasure knows,
Skies without cloud, " and without thorn the rose."

YOUTH'S EMBLEMS.

"Of nature's gifts thou may'st with lilies boast
And with the half-blown rose."

Thou of light heart and footstep free,
Of open brow and eye of glee,
What emblems shall I choose for thee
From nature's store ?

Whate'er is bright, whate'er is sweet,
Yet fugitive withal, and fleet,
These, these alas ! are emblems meet,
Gay youth, of thee.

What better than the budding flower,
Ere it has felt the north-wind's power,
Or learnt that sunny skies may lour,
Thy bloom may shew ?

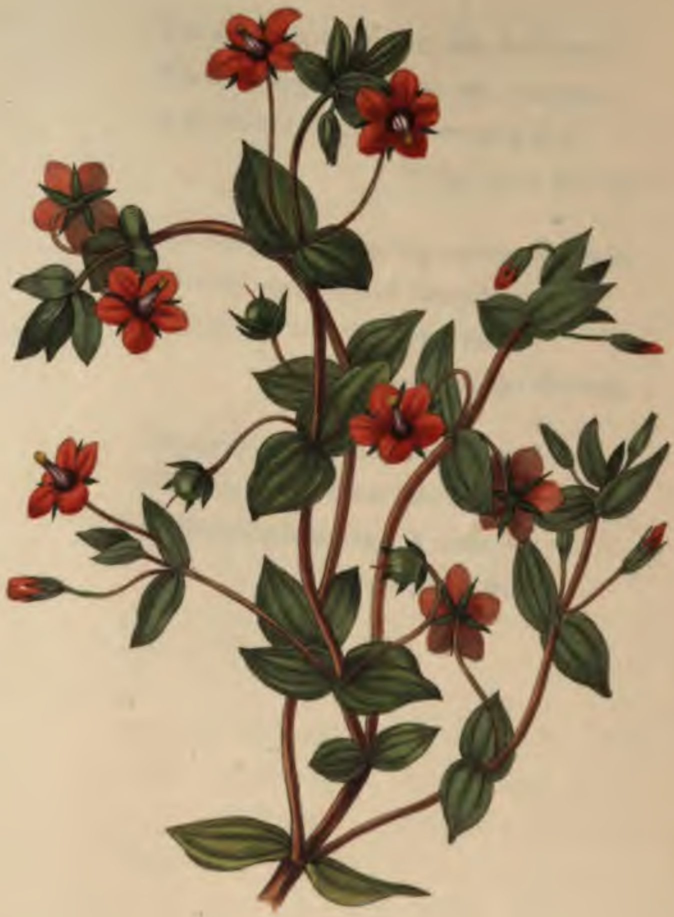
What than the light in eastern skies,
When the glad sun prepares to rise,
And dew that on the rose-leaf lies,
Thy smiles and tears ?

What than the many-tinted bow
Which on the deepening cloud doth glow
Like vision fair, may better shew
Thy hopes and joys?

The flower's leaves our path shall strew,
The morning brightness mock our view,
And heavier drops than morning dew
Weigh down the rose.

And thus thy bloom, thy smiles must fade.
Thus die each hope of fancy bred.
And sorrow bow thy weary head.
Like storms the rose.

Yet weep not—for there is a sphere
Where joy ne'er turns into a tear.
Unchanging bliss alone is there—
Oh be it thine!



THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL.

ANAGALLIS ARVENSIS.

"Of humbler growth, tho' brighter dyes
But not by rural swains less prized
The trailing stems allure
Of Pimpernel, whose brilliant flower
Closes against the approaching shower,
Warning the swain to sheltering bower
From humid air secure."

"The name of this plant, anagallis, retained from the old Greek and Roman authors, is probably from the verb *αναγελαω*, to smile, from the conspicuous beauty of its flowers"; and truly does it merit any title indicative of simple yet brilliant beauty, for none of our wild flowers can exceed it in loveliness.

The anagallis closes its petals "at the approach of rain, as farmers and shepherds in general very well know." Its blooming during those months when the state of the atmosphere is of the most consequence to agricultural pursuits, may make it more consulted by the peasant, and have thus obtained for it the name of "the poor man's weatherglass."

The anagallis cerulea almost vies with the arvensis in beauty. It seems at present a disputed point among botanists whether it shall be considered a species or a variety.

This flower is very rarely found of a brilliant white.

Up and abroad—the earth puts on
Her beautiful array,
The heavens their glory, for the sun
Rejoiceth on his way.
Not vainly shall he shed his ray,
Yon mountain's height I'll brave,
Or trim my skiff so light and gay,
And wake the slumbering wave.
Hark ! how the fresh breeze bears along
To heaven wide nature's matin song.

But what is here ? The pimpernel
Drooping with close-shut eye—
True sign, so village sages tell,
Of storm and tempest nigh—

But sure such bright and glorious sky
Shall know no cloud to-day,
O then thy darkling prophecy
Give to the winds away,
And own, whilst thou yon heavens dost view,
For once thou hast not read them true.

Despite my taunt, the prescient flower,
Still closed its petals bright,
And soon the storm, with voice of power,
Shew'd its forebodings right.
'Tis ever thus—some sudden blight,
When most we dream of joy,
Does on the shining prospect light
To mar it and destroy.
Oh ! when like this poor flower shall I
Discern aright life's changing sky ?

THE EVENING PRIMROSE.

ŒNOTHERA BIENNIS.

" Flower of eve, I love to view thee,
While thy dewy petals spread,
Tearfully my looks pursue thee,
As thou rear'st thy golden head.
Sleep may rest on other eyes,
Our's shall commune with the skies."

The flowers of this plant expand in the evening, and are delicately fragrant. " It is common in gardens, and often escapes from thence into rich waste ground. But on the dreary sands of our Lancashire coast it is truly wild, being planted there by the hand of nature, though perhaps transported, by natural means, from the other side of the Atlantic. It has been found in the greatest abundance between the first and second ranges of sand-banks on the coast of Lancashire, a few miles north of Liverpool. It also covers several acres of ground near Woodbridge, Suffolk, and is seen on the banks of the Arrow, Warwickshire."

‘ The sun his latest ray has shed,
The wild-bird to its nest has sped,
And buds which to the day-beam spread
Their brightest glow,
Incline their dew-besprinkled head
In slumber now.

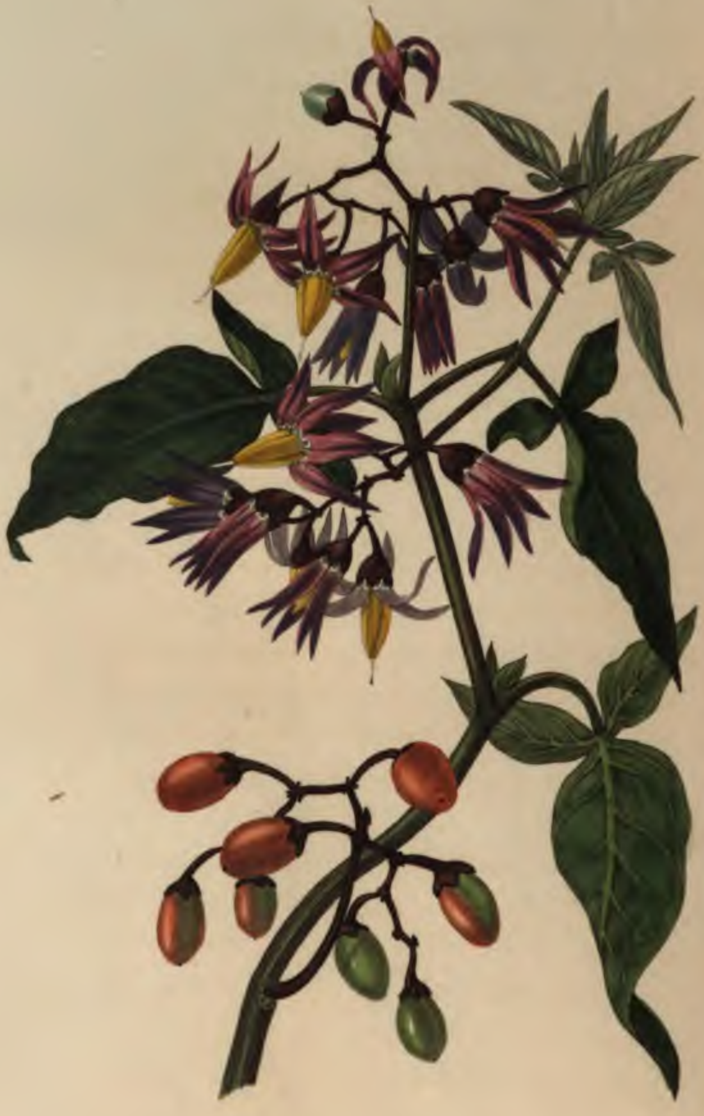
Then why art thou lone vigils keeping,
Pale flower, when all beside are sleeping ?
Are not the same soft zephyrs sweeping
Each slender stem,
And the same opiate dew-drops steeping
Both thee and them ?’

‘ Eve is my noon—at this still hour,
When softly sleeps each sister flower,
Sole watcher of the dusky bower
I joy to be,
And conscious feel the pale moon shower
Her light on me.

Soon as meek evening veils the sky,
And wildly fresh her breeze flits by,
And on my breast the dewdrops lie,
I feel to live,
And what is mine of fragrancy
I freely give.

Say thou who thus dost question me,
Wouldst thou from earth's dull cares be free
O listen and I'll counsel thee
Wisely to shun
Tumult and glare and vanity,
As I have done.

"Enter thy closet, shut the door,"
And heavenward let thy spirit soar,
Then softer dews than bathe the flower
On thee shall rest,
And beams which sun nor moon can pour
Illume thy breast.'



THE WOODY NIGHT-SHADE, OR BITTER-SWEET.

SOLANUM DULCAMARA.

> "Oh! star-eyed science, hast thou wandered there
> To waft us home the message of despair?
> Ah me! the laurelled wreath that murder rears,
> Blood-nursed, and watered by the widow's tears,
> Seems not so foul, so tainted, and so dread
> As waves the night-shade round the sceptic's head."

Were it allowable for man to desire any thing in nature to be otherwise than it is, one might wish this poisonous plant were clothed in a garb less attractive, and more indicative of its deleterious qualities; as the beauty of its blossoms and fruit, known to the peasantry by the name of poison-berries, often proves fatally tempting to children.

"There is no smell in the dried herb, but that of the recent plant is heavy and disagreeable. The stalks, whether fresh or dried, have a slightly bitter taste, followed by a remarkable sweetness, somewhat resembling liquorice, a peculiarity which no doubt suggested the name Glycipieros, and Dulcamara, of which the English trivial name Bitter-sweet is a just translation."

Away, away with thy tempting bloom—
Go seek thee a fitting bower—
In the church-yard drear by the haunted tomb,
Or the falling shrine make thy cheerless home,
Thou fair but treacherous flower;
Or where mandrakes* grow by the wizard's cave,
And the adder lurks, let thy garlands wave.

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* In the dark ages when ignorance and superstition, "fancy sick," shaped out of the commonest objects of nature "Gorgons, and Hydras, and chimeras dire," the mandrake held the foremost rank amongst those "plants of power" which were supposed to possess a mysterious influence over the destiny of man. The procuring it was considered a most hazardous undertaking, for on being dislodged from its bed it was said to utter shrieks and groans, and whoever was within hearing died, or became mad; Shakspeare alludes to this notion in Romeo and Juliet.

"Torn out of the earth
That living mortals hearing them run mad."

And in Henry the Sixth,

"Would curses kill as doth the mandrake's groan
I would invent as bitter searching terms,
As curst, as harsh, as horrible to hear."

"The reported mode of uprooting it," says Drummond, "was to fasten the tail of a dog by cords to the bottom of the stem, and then the animal was whipped, until by his struggles the plant was dragged from the earth, while the persons who directed this operation had their ears filled with pitch, lest they should hear the fatal groan. The dog *of course* fell dead at the same time or soon after."

For alas! alas! there's a deadly spell
   Concealed thy leaves among,
And 'tis meet thou should'st leave bright mead and dell,
Where duly at eve the wild birds swell
   To more innocent flowers their song;
Be the raven's croak from the blasted tree,
And the owlet's scream thy lullaby.

Yet, ere thou depart, let thy graceful wreath
   For one moment be lightly flung
Round the mirror of beauty, to show her beneath
What is lovely and bright lurk the seeds of death;
   And despite bland flattery's tongue,
She might learn this lesson for after-hour,
That beauty alone is a worthless dower.

Oh! teach her but this, then away, away
   Where the wine flows free and bright—
And instead of the vine and the ivy spray,
Amid laughter, and dance, and festive lay,
   Oh! twine, in the reveller's sight,
Round the foaming bowl thy poisonous wreath,
To shew him its draught is linked with death.

Once more, and thy task is done—yea go
   To thy last and fittest shrine;
Alas! that there should be a human brow,
Where aught so baneful and false as thou
   May without polluting shine!
The sceptic—I tremble to breathe his name—
Thine be the garlands which crown his fame.

THE ROSE.

ROSA.

" Sweet rose, in air whose odours wave
And colour charms the eye,
Thy root is ever in the grave,
And thou alas must die."

So many are the classical legends and poetical associations connected with the rose, that they crowd almost too thickly on the memory, baffling it by their very profusion. By common consent, in every clime and every age, the rose has been held the queen of flowers. It has been the poet's theme from time immemorial, and vain would be the attempt to transcribe even the hundredth part of the beautiful things which have been said or sung of it. Generally speaking, its eulogists, in our country at least, have anticipated its appearance, and bestowed it, with other tokens of lavish regard, on their favourite May. Thus Thompson in his Invocation to Spring says,

————" Veiled in a shower
Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend."

And Spenser speaks of

“The roses reigning in the pride of May.”

Milton however designates it rightly, when in his pathetic lament on his blindness, he says

———“Thus with the year
Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of ev'n or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or *summer's* rose.”

Drummond, also, the sweet poet of Hawthornden, has the following lines on a rose plucked from its stem—

“Look as the flower which lingeringly doth fade,
The morning's darling late, the *summer's* queen:
Spoiled of that juice which kept it fresh and green,
As high as it did raise, bows low its head.”

And it is in summer, when the garden is in its glory and not a blossom seems wanting, that the rose, “at length apparent queen,” comes forth as if to receive the homage of all other flowers, not haughtily, but with most winning grace, as if “afraid to claim her full authority.”

Its fragrance, too, is equal to its beauty ; that of other flowers may be more spicy, more luscious, more powerful, but the fragrance of the rose is unique.

For the benefit of those who wish to be acquainted with the classical legends relating to this elegant flower, as well as with its various species and natural history, I give the following extracts from the Medical Botany :—

" The ancients tell us that roses were originally white, but were changed to red by the blood of Venus, when her feet were lacerated by their prickles in her attempt to protect Adonis from the rage of Mars. Another fable states that Cupid overthrew a bowl of nectar, which, falling to earth, stained the rose.

" The rose was given by Cupid as a bribe to Harpocrates, the god of silence ; from whence, we should suppose, originated the custom which, according to Rosenbergius, prevailed among the northern nations of Europe, of suspending a rose from the ceiling over the upper end of their tables, when it was intended that the conversation which took place should be secret : and it is this custom that undoubtedly gave rise to the common expression, ' Under the rose.'

" A golden rose was considered so honourable a present, that none but crowned heads were thought worthy either to give or to receive it. Roses of this kind were sometimes consecrated by the Popes on Good Friday, and given to such potentates as they most wished to propitiate. The flower itself they considered an emblem of the mortality of the body, and the metal of which it was composed of the immortality of the soul. Boethius says that William, King of Scotland, received a present of this sort from Pope Alexander the Third, and Henry the Eighth a similar gift from Alexander the Sixth. The seal of Luther, which is a rose, is supposed to be symbolical of the same things as those golden presents were.

"Roses were also employed by the Roman Emperors as a means of conferring honours upon their most famous generals, whom they allowed to add a rose to the ornaments of their shields, a custom which continued long after the Roman empire had passed away, and the vestiges of which may yet be traced in the armorial bearings of many of the ancient noble families of Europe." Let it not here be forgotten that it is the national badge of England.

"As objects of cultivation, roses have always been eagerly sought after, and, for the purpose of increasing their beauty, every means have been adopted that are likely to make them double. Hence we account for the multitude of individuals with which every garden abounds, whose beauty is only equalled by the extreme difficulty of tracing them to their original stock. And we may go back to the days of Herodotus, Athenæus, and Theophrastus, each of whom advert particularly to double roses; while Pliny enumerates several sorts, amongst which is the R. *centifolia*.

"The species are all included between the 70th and 20th degrees of northern latitude, except the R. *Montezuma* of Mexico, found in 19° N. at an elevation of more than 9300 feet above the level of the sea. But Baron Humboldt has calculated that in tropical countries the decrement of caloric is one degree over 9° toises of vertical elevation; therefore the heat at this height would be nearly the same as that of countries 29° further from the equator; so that its situation is essentially the same as that of the European parallel, to the species of which it is more readily related than to those of its own continent. In Asia, which may indeed be called the "land of the rose," half the species have been found. Of the thirty-nine it produces, eighteen are natives of the Russian dominions and the adjacent countries. Most of them are similar to the European portion of the genus, and five are common to Europe and Asia. Of the remainder, one, which is perhaps a distinct genus, has been discovered in Persia, fifteen in China, and two of the latter, with four others in the North of India; one of which has considerable affinity to the R. *moschata* of Northern Africa. The Chinese and Indian species have a habit entirely different from the rest. With the roses of the Crimea we are entirely unacquainted; and yet they are said to grow there in the most astonishing profusion. Europe has twenty-five species, of which 5-6ths exist between 40° and 50°. Britain, according to Smith, has twenty-two species: Denmark seven: Holland thirteen: whilst in Spain, Portugal, and the Levant, only four species have been observed. In the North of Africa are two species peculiar to that country, and two others common to it and Europe. Fourteen species have been found in North America, only two of which, R. *Montezuma* and *stricta* bear much general resemblance to European roses. The R. *lævigata* of the woods of Georgia is so similar to the R. *sinica* of China, as not to be immediately distinguished from it; and the latter is even sold in some of the London nurseries under the name of R. *Cherokeensis*."

To the true lovers of the rose—and who is not?—no apology will be needed for the insertion of this somewhat long but most interesting quotation. What remains to be said, however, must be briefly noticed. Many species of the rose retain their scent long after death. On this peculiarity the poet thus comments:

> "And first of all, the rose; because its breath
> Is rich beyond the rest; and when it dies,
> It doth bequeath a charm to sweeten death."

And Shakspeare, perhaps in reference to the exquisite perfume extracted from its blossoms, thus eulogizes it—

> "The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
> For that sweet odour which doth in it live.
> The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye
> As the perfumed tincture of the roses,
> Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly,
> When summer's breath their masked buds discloses.
> But, for their virtue only is their show,
> They live unmoved, and unrespected fade:
> Die to themselves; sweet roses do not so;
> Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made."

It is this delightful quality in the rose which has given rise to the following lines.

Go bloom of youth—I will not sigh
As fleets thy evanescent dye;
Bright glances, airy steps, farewell!
Of mirth and vigour though ye tell;
I will not mourn as I survey
Each after each in turn decay.
Take, take, O Time, destroying power!
These relics of the youthful hour,
And, or in mockery or play,
Weave 'midst my locks thy tresses gray;

Pass thy rude finger o'er my brow.
And round my face thy furrows throw.
But lightly lay thy spells unkind
Upon the treasures of the mind.
Nor seal those sacred founts where lie
The springs of sensibility.
May thought still soar, may fancy play,
Freely as in life's earlier day:
May fond affection still possess
The heart to feel, the hand to bless:
To woe be pity's tear still given,
As to parched flower the dew of heaven.
But chiefly, as I see and feel
Life's deepening shadows o'er me steal,
May faith, and hope, and holy love
Shine every other grace above,
As night's pure gems are best displayed,
The darker grows the gathering shade.
This were to fade as doth the rose,
When the chill north-wind o'er it blows;
Its early brightness may decay,
Its leaves fall one by one away,
Yet, yet, despite both wind and rain
Its fragrance doth unharmed remain,
As if to point this moral home—
Man's nobler part survives his bloom.

THE WHITE ROSE.

ROSA ALBA.

" A single rose is shedding there
  Its lonely lustre meek and pale:
It looks as planted by despair,
  So white, so faint, the slightest gale
Might whirl the leaves on high:
  And yet, though storms and blight assail,
And hands more rude than wintry sky
  May wring it from the stem in vain,
  To-morrow sees it bloom again."

There is something peculiarly attractive in white flowers; they seem to embody the very idea of purity and innocence. Among them the rose is pre-eminent in loveliness, and whilst gazing on its opening blossoms

———" of purest virgin white
Low-bent and blushing inward,"

one feels disposed to give it the meed of beauty before all other flowers, and to address it with the lavish praise that Ferdinand bestows on Miranda, altering a word to suit the occasion :

" But you, oh you
So perfect and so peerless are created
Of every blossom's best."

I know not whether the white rose may lay claim to an equal share of classical and poetical association with its blushing sister; its supposed origin, however, is at least as fanciful, as it was said by the ancients to spring from the tears of Venus on the death of Adonis. It also shares another unenvied distinction; that of being the chosen badge of the Yorkists, as the red rose was of the Lancastrians, in the civil wars between the two houses. In Henry the Sixth, the King, in his piteous lament at the sight of a father bearing from the battle-field the son whom he had unwittingly killed, thus alludes to the rival flowers:

"O, pity, pity, gentle Heaven, pity!—
The red rose and the white are on his face
The fatal colours of our striving houses."

And thus again in Richard the Third, after the battle of Bosworth, Richmond, alluding to his anticipated marriage with the heiress of the house of York, says,

"We will unite the white rose with the red:
Smile Heaven upon this fair conjunction
That long hath frowned upon their enmity."

Hay Drummond presented the following elegant impromptu with a white rose to a lady of the Lancastrian party:

"If this pale rose offend thy sight
It in thy bosom wear,
Twill blush to find itself less white,
And grow Lancastrian there."

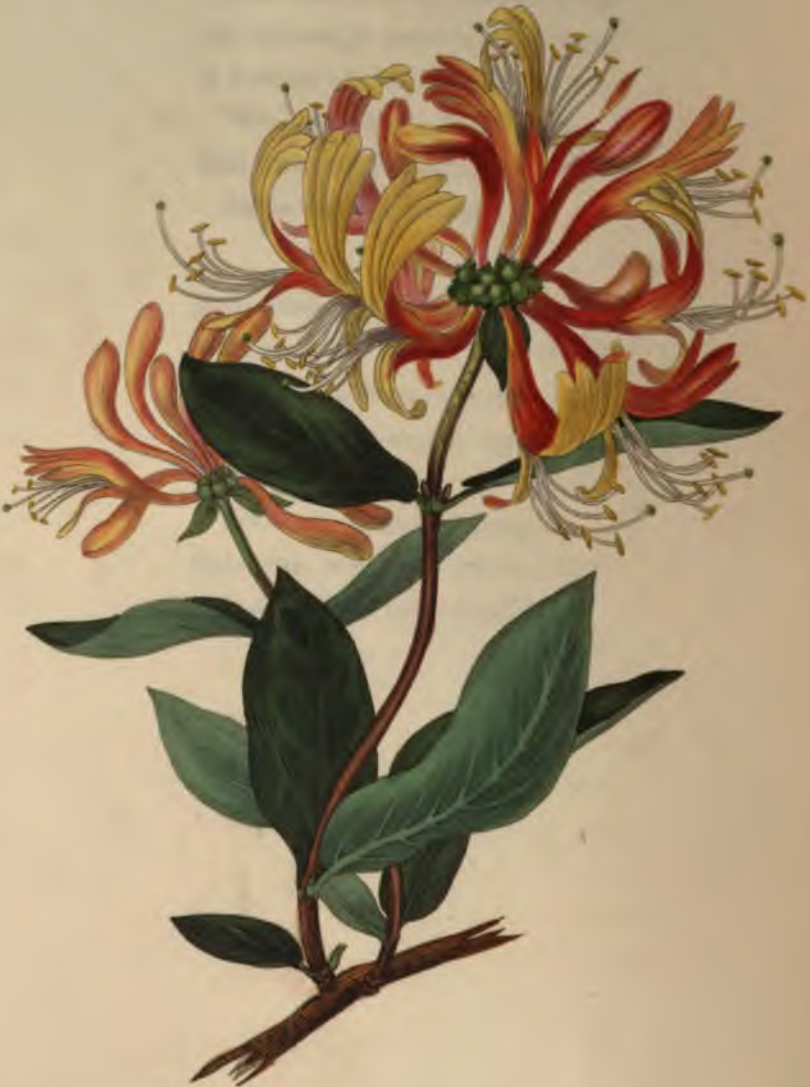
By way of introduction to the following lines, I would just add, that they were presented to an afflicted friend who bade me observe a solitary white rose most rudely blown about by the wind on a stormy evening.

Thou bid'st me mark how yon lone rose
Bends as the wild wind o'er it blows,
Then, meekly rising, seems to eye
With calm submissiveness the sky,
Though rain and tempest mingling there
  Spread universal gloom,
To thing so fragile and so fair
  Portending certain doom.

Yet still its soft leaves it unfolds,
Nor aught of fragrancy withholds,
Filling with sweets the wind's rude wing
As though 'twere gentlest gale of spring,—
Thus may'st thou bow the storm beneath,
  Thus meekly re-ascend;
And thus may praise its incensed breath
  With sigh of sorrow blend.

Without or bud or sheltering spray
Yon flow'ret meets the tempest's sway,
Whilst thou in sweet domestic bower
Art screened in sorrow's trying hour,
A husband's kindly arm thy stay
When cares and griefs abound,
And buds of promise fair and gay
Encircling thee around.

Buds whose young beauties wake the thought,
With hope and comfort richly fraught,
That when their opening charms assume
Their destined character and bloom,
On this cold earth thou wilt not grieve
With none to share thy sigh,
But loved, protected, cherished live,
And wept and honoured die.



THE WOODBINE OR HONEYSUCKLE.

LONICERA PERICLYMENUM.

"So doth the woodbine, the sweet honeysuckle,
Gently entwist the maple."

With this triumphant quotation Sir J. E. Smith would seem desirous to silence all those who aver Shakspeare has committed a somewhat similar error to that of his brother bard, who designates the Honeysuckle the "twisted Eglantine." I must reluctantly admit, that in many editions of Shakspeare those conclusive words "the maple" are not added; if, however, they be found in any, it is sufficient to vindicate the poet, who, one would wish to believe, was acquainted

"With every star the heaven doth shew,
And every flower that sips the dew."

One is also glad to observe that Milton redeems the error which has called forth so much criticism by giving this sweet plant, in Comus, its proper appellation:

"I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied and interwove,
And flaunting honey-suckle."

The common wild English honeysuckle, or woodbine, is a native of most parts of Europe, growing in woods and hedges, and is also found in the Chinese empire. Fragrant and elegant as it is, it must be a welcome visitor wherever it appears, and few flowers, either for their exquisite odour or for their frail and clinging character, have received more poetical eulogy. It perfumes the air to a great distance, especially in cloudy weather, and at morning and evening, when the sun has not power to exhale its sweetness. Thus Cowper celebrates it—

> "Copious of flowers, the woodbine, pale and wan,
> But well compensating her sickly looks
> With never cloying odours, early and late."

It is however in shady situations alone that it assumes the "sickly looks" the poet mentions, for when more exposed to the sun it is beautifully streaked with varying shades of red and yellow.

In common with most of our trailing plants, it climbs from east to west, and its seeking support from every friendly bough, has obtained for it the ill-deserved nameof the "gadding or flaunting honeysuckle;" may not fancy indulge the thought that from conscious weakness

> "To withered tree, to old grey stone,
> To these, or any thing 'twill cling."

Laurel wreath for warrior twine,
  Thoughts of hard-fought field 'twill raise;
Crown the poet's deathless line,
  "'Tis his due, with sprig of bays;"
Myrtle for the lover bring,
  Orange-flower for blushing bride,
And let violets ever spring
  Where the dead sleep side by side.

But, from Flora's fairy realm
  Token wouldst thou bring for me,
Go where round yon towering elm
  Clings the woodbine tenderly;
Bear me thence one wilding spray
  Just in fancy's ear to breathe,
That to thee my bosom's stay
  Fond I cling as woodbine wreath.

Nor to fancy's ear alone
  Doth it kindly thought impart,
Wouldst thou soar, but strength hast none?
  Clings to earth thy grovelling heart?
Seek, like yonder fragile flower,
  Fitting prop round which to twine—
There's an arm of love and power,
  Lean on it, and heaven is thine.

THE WHITE WATER LILY.

NYMPHÆA ALBA.

"Mark where transparent waters glide,
Soft flowing o'er their tranquil bed;
There, cradled in the dimpling tide,
Nymphæa rests her lovely head.
But conscious of the earliest beam,
She rises from her humid rest,
And sees reflected in the stream
The virgin whiteness of her breast
Till the bright day-star to the west
Declines, in Ocean's surge to lave,
Then folded in her modest vest
She slumbers in the rocking wave."

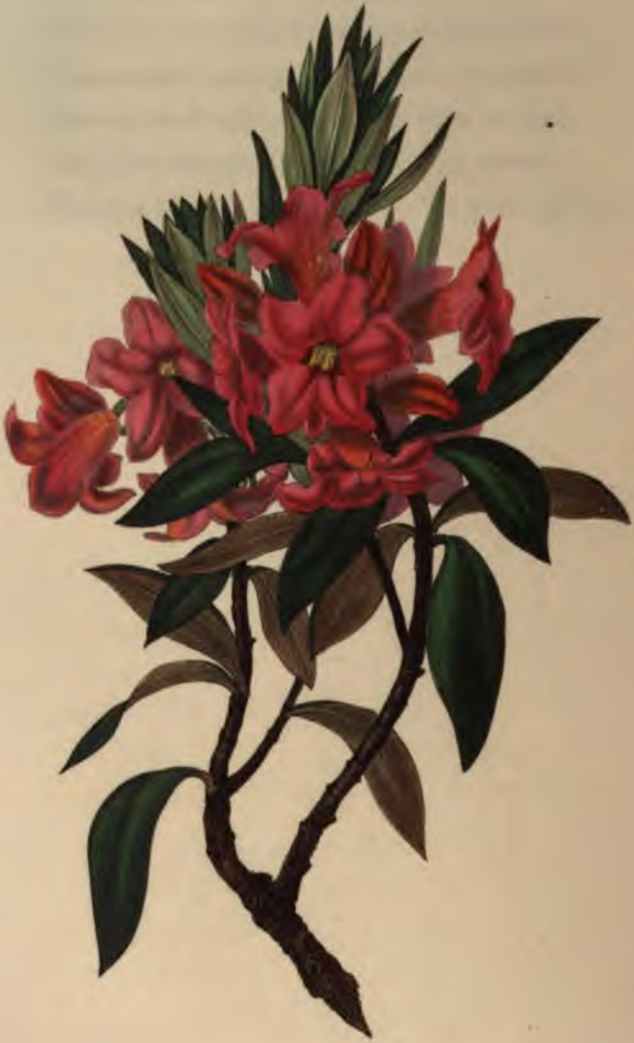
If the rose be the queen of the bower, the water lily may certainly aspire to be queen of the stream. Sir James Smith remarks that "it is perhaps the most magnificent of our native flowers. Its blossoms expand in sunshine, and the middle of the day only, closing towards evening, when they recline on the surface of the water, or sink beneath it. The sinking of the flowers under water at night," he continues, "having been denied, or at least doubted, I have been careful to *verify* it in this species. The same circumstance is recorded of the Egyptian N. Lotus, from the most remote antiquity. The stimulus of light, which indeed acts evidently on other blossoms and leaves, expands and raises, with peculiar force, these splendid white flowers, that the pollen may reach the stigma uninjured; and when that stimulus ceases to act, they close again, drooping by their own weight, to a certain depth."

"The Egyptian water lily" (Nymphæa Lotus), says Miller, "resembles our common white species in the form of the flower and leaves, but the latter are toothed at the edge. It is a native of the hot parts of the East Indies, Africa, and America. It is very common in ponds, lakes, and rivers in Jamaica, and grows in vast quantities in the plains of lower Egypt near Cairo, during the time they are under water. The ancient Egyptians made a bread of the seed of the Lotus dried and ground." Another species of nymphæa, the Nelumbo, or plated water lily, is held sacred by the Japanese, and the images of their idols, says Thunberg, are often seen sitting on its leaves. The Chinese have also the same veneration for it. The seeds, which are about the size and form of the acorn, are of a flavour more delicate than almonds. The ponds there are generally covered with its large and beautiful blossoms, which are no less fragrant than handsome. This brings me back to our own lovely Nymphæa, which surely may vie with any in beauty, and which I well remember floating on the bosom of Loch Ard in the summer of 1831, adding another charm to the recollections I retain of that exquisite lake.

Yes, thou art day's own flower—for when he's fled,
Sorrowing thou droop'st beneath the wave thy head,
And watching, weeping through the livelong night,
Look'st forth impatient for the dawning light,
And, as it brightens into perfect day,
Dost from the inmost fold thy breast display.

Oh would that I, from earth's defilement free,
Could bare my bosom to the light like thee!
But, ah! I feel within a blighting power
Marring each grace, like hidden worm the flower,
And trembling, shrinking, gladly would I fly
That "light of light," Jehovah's piercing eye.

Yet whither can I go? Oh! there's a wave
Where he who weeps for sin his soul may lave;
There would I plunge, and sad, not hopeless lie
Waiting the first fair day-spring from on high,
Then glad emerging from the healing stream
Welcome like thee, sweet flower, the dawning beam.



THE RUSTY-LEAVED RHODODENDRON.

RHODODENDRUM FERRUGINEUM.

> "Whose joy is in the wilderness, to breathe
> The difficult air of the iced mountain top."

There are several species of the Rhododendron, all hardy mountaineers. One indeed, (the Rhododendron Caucasicum, whose very name almost makes us shiver) is a native of Mount Caucasus, skirting the borders of perpetual ice in the highest range of shrubby vegetation. The one which I have chosen, inhabits the high mountains of Switzerland, Savoy, and Dauphiné. "It is an irregular evergreen shrub about eight inches in height; the lower branches, lying on the ground, put out fibres, and hence it may easily be increased without the principal root being disturbed, which being fixed deep in the fissures of rocks, is not pulled up without much difficulty." Its blossoms are of a beautiful pale rose colour, and hence its name of Rosa Alpina. There is a variety with a white flower, but it is not common.

Mr. Gilly, in his interesting volume of "Waldensian Researches," mentioning the altitude at which different trees and plants will grow, says that, along with the Alder, this ranger of the mountains will thrive at the height of six thousand feet above the sea. It supplies the shepherds with their only fuel; in hard weather, it is said, the grouse eat it, and the white hares gnaw its bark; but it is only when there is a lack of other food, as animals are not fond of it.

Raffles alludes to this beautiful shrub "mingling its little crimson blossoms with the scanty herbage which clothes the mountains, rising almost perpendicularly from the sides of the glacier on the summit of Montanvert," and doubtlessly it has gladdened many a traveller's heart, reminding him of Him

"Who makes so gay the solitary place."

The cheering influence of a small moss on the mind of Mungo Park, when, a stranger in a strange land, he had just been robbed and barbarously treated, is familiar to every one; and who would wonder or grieve that these "beauties of the wilderness" should bloom "where few eyes see them," if but even in an occasional instance they have served to soothe and animate the desponding, by renewing his impression of the boundless beneficence and superintending providence of God.

‘Gem of the Alps! ’tis strange to trace
Aught beautiful as thou,
Glad’ning “the solitary place”
With unexpected glow.
Yet, bright one! cold thy bed must be,
And harsh thy evening lullaby;
Would thou wert planted in the bower
Which summer weaves for bird and flower!
And rocked to slumber by the gale
She breathes in yonder sunny vale!’

‘Oh tell me not of valley fair
Where sweeter flowrets bloom,
I too have sun and healthful air
In this my mountain home;
Yet, stranger, doth thy sympathy
Demand some poor return from me,
And what if I, frail lowly thing,
Such lesson to thine heart might bring,
That thou in after hour should’st bless
The flow’ret of the wilderness.

Deem'st thou these snows scarce fitting bower
For aught so fair as I?
O know that One whose will is power
Has shaped my destiny;
He spake me into being,—shed
His sunshine on my alpine bed,
Bade the strong blast which shook the pine
Pass harmless o'er this head of mine,
And gently reared my early bloom,
'Mid snows which else had been my tomb.

View in this mountain's frozen breast
An emblem true of thine,
So cold, so hard, 'till on it rest
A beam of light divine.
Feel'st thou this life-inspiring ray?
If not, then upward look, and pray
That he who made these mountain-snows
A cradle for the opening rose,
Would deep within thine heart embower
A brighter far than earthly flower.'

THE SENSITIVE PLANT.

MIMOSA SENSITIVA.

"Weak with nice sense, the chaste Mimosa stands,
From each rude touch withdraws her timid hands;
Oft as light clouds o'erpass the summer-glade
Alarmed she trembles at the moving shade:
And feels alive through all her tender form
The whispered murmurs of the gathering storm."

The diversities of nature are infinite. After contemplating a flowering shrub which scales the highest mountains, and almost braves the region of perpetual snow, we now turn to so delicate a little plant, that a touch, a breath, will cause it to tremble through every leaf; and hence its name of sensitive or humble plant.

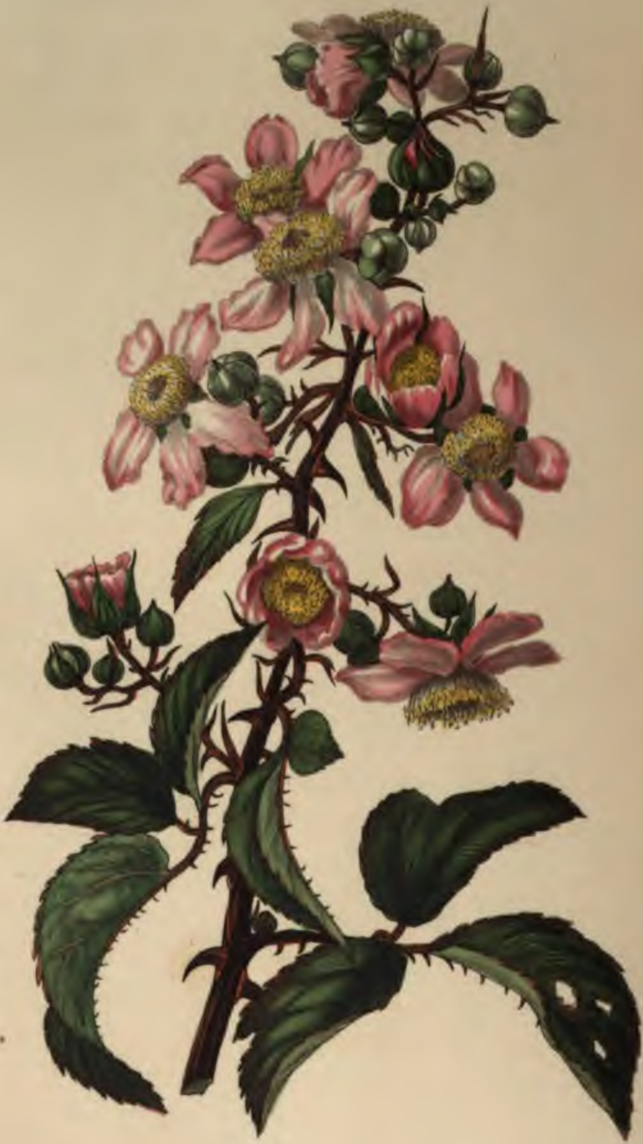
These appellations, indeed, designate different species; the sensitive plant on *pressure* only contracts its small leaves which are placed along the mid rib, while even the footstalks of the yet more timid humble plant decline at the slightest *touch*.

Both these species are natives of Brazil, and in their proper habitation grow to the height of seven or eight feet. Dr. Darwin accounts for what is called the sleep of the plant, by the absence of the stimulus of light; but more recent observations have disproved this conjecture, as the leaves are found to contract by five or six o'clock in the longest summer days, when the sun remains above the horizon some hours longer; nor do they continue shut till he rises, as they are often fully expanded at the first break of dawn. Their susceptibility also varies greatly according to the degree of temperature in which they are placed; when kept in a warm stove, the smallest drop of water falling on their leaves, nay even a passing breath, will cause them instantly to collapse. As it is this peculiarity which gives the plant its chief value, it is, of course, generally placed in such a temperature as will be likely to keep this sensitive character in full vigour. There are many traveller's stories related of the mimosa to which little credence is given. Some say the Indians extract a slow poison from the leaves and branches, which the root only can remedy; be this as it may, it has been found that no animal browses on it in the countries where it grows, which may perhaps give some countenance to the opinion. "Sensitive plants were not unknown to the ancients; they are mentioned both by Theophrastus and Pliny; indeed, the Mimosa Nilotica is said by some writers to be the plant which accidentally wreathing round a basket with a tile on it suggested the idea of the Corinthian capital. The mode of growth in this species is singular; 'the stems grow far apart, but the tops are flat, and spread abroad so as to touch each other and form a verdant canopy, under which the traveller may walk many miles undisturbed by the rays of the most vertical sun.' From this tree various gums are extracted, as gum arabic, frankincense, &c."—*Bruce's Travels.*

Nay little trembler, shrink not thus
As though a foe were nigh;
I would not harm thy smallest leaf,
Then let thy terrors fly.

Alas! 'mongst human kind there be
Hearts sensitive as thou,
Who hear in every tone reproof,
See frowns on every brow.

Oh may I ne'er such dark distrust
With needful caution blend,
But rather view, till else I've proved,
Each stranger as a friend.



THE COMMON BRAMBLE OR BLACKBERRY.

RUBUS FRUTICOSUS.

" In shady lanes the children stray
Looking for blackberries through the day,
Those berries of such old renown!"

In a work that may perhaps lay claim to something of an ornamental character, it may be matter of wonder that this commonest of all common plants should be admitted among the chosen specimens; but as in making the selection I have had throughout an eye to the moral of flowers, this despised and maltreated shrub seems by no means unworthy of the station it occupies. Something too of early reminiscence may predispose one in its favour; who does not remember the time when "on a sunshine holiday" a blackberry gathering was the highest treat, and when its insipid fruit was eaten with a relish far beyond that which the rarest hot-house novelty can afford in riper years. Who does not remember also the shrinking awe with which he passed the tempting branch after Michaelmas day, believing, with a credulity which would not have disgraced the days of popery, the vulgar superstition that on that day the devil casts his club over the fruit. It is amusing to see how gravely Threlkeld rebuts the tradition. "I look upon this as a vulgar error," says he, "that the devil casts his club over them, after Michaelmas, for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."

Before we take leave of this plant, we must not forget to notice its connection with the well-known popular nursery ballad "The Babes in the Wood." However successfully the rising emotion had been combatted in the preceding stanzas, the following lines, even at the hundredth repetition, were sure to open the floodgates of childish sorrow.

"Their little hands and pretty lips
With blackberries were dyed,
And when they saw the darksome night
They sat them down and cried."

Beattie's allusion to

"This tale of rural life, a tale of woes,
The orphan babes, and guardian uncle fierce,"

must not be passed over, and we even now almost share the varied emotion of the infant minstrel whilst reading the following stanzas.

"— with berries smeared, with brambles torn,
The babes now famished lay them down to die;
'Midst the wild howl of darksome woods forlorn,
Folded in one another's arms they lie;
Nor friend, nor stranger hears their dying cry,
" For from the town the man returns no more."
But thou, who Heaven's just vengeance darest defy
This deed with fruitless tears shalt soon deplore
When death lays waste thy house, and flames consume thy store."

What dost thou here pale flower?
Thou that afore wert never seen to shine
In gay parterre, or gentle lady's bower,
In lover's wreath, or poet's gifted line.

Why from thy lowly haunts
Art thou now called, to have a place and name
'Mid buds whose beauty fancy's eye enchants,
Whose fragrance puts thy scentless leaves to shame?

'Tis that though suffering ill,
Yea, spurned and trodden by each passer by,
Blossom and berry dost thou proffer still,
As all unmindful of the injury.

Hardest of lessons this
To suffer wrong with meekness—few, how few,
The hand which smites unjustly stoop to kiss,
Or blessings on their foeman's pathway strew.

Then welcome, lowly flower!
Welcome amid the fragrant and the gay,
For which of all the buds in summer bower
Can fitter lesson to proud man convey?

THE DARK-FLOWERED STOCK-GILLIFLOWER.

CHEIRANTHUS TRISTIS.

" 'Call back your odours, lonely flowers,
From the night-wind call them back,
And fold your leaves, till the laughing hours
Come forth on the sunbeam's track!'

'Nay let our shadowy beauty bloom
When the stars give quiet light,
And let us offer our faint perfume
On the silent shrine of night.' "

The Cheiranthus Tristis is a plant of lowly growth, and perhaps the most homely of the genus to which it belongs. The sombre hue of its blossoms, and their exhaling fragrance only in the night, may probably have originated the appellation of melancholy gilliflower. Many of the double varieties are eminently beautiful, and give out their rich odours so freely in the day time as fully to deserve the notice of Thompson, who in his enumeration of flowers passes this encomium on the whole tribe:

"And lavish stock which scents the garden round."

There seems a peculiar fragrancy in the scent of night-blowing flowers; it is something akin to night-music. No doubt the imagination aids the impression, and were we free from its entanglements, we should perhaps in this matter come to Portia's conclusion, when she says

> "I think
> The nightingale, if she should sing by day
> When every goose is cackling, would be thought
> No better a musician than the wren.
> How many things by season seasoned are
> To their right praise and true perfection."

'Long hath the lily closed her silver bells,
And the rose drooped 'neath evening's dewy spells,
But thou, still sleepless, to the gale dost spread
Sweets which might seem from fairy's censer shed;
What holds thee waking?—not the guilt or woes
That oft from human bosoms scare repose.

Let care and sorrow watch the night-hours through,
Let misers wake to count their hoards anew,
But flowers, sweet flowers, "which neither spin nor toil,"
Whose little lives are one perpetual smile,
Children of sunshine—ye, with day's last gleam,
Should sink to sleep till roused by morning's beam.'

‘The sun has cheered me through the livelong day,
The breeze has fanned me in its gentle play,
The dews have fed me, and the summer shower
Tempered the fervour of the noontide hour,
Then is't not meet, ere yet I close my eye,
That I should yield to heaven a fragrant sigh ?

Reverse the scene—should threat'ning clouds prevail,
And loud and louder blow the angry gale,
Still if it spare me on my slender stem,
While round me strewn is many a fairer gem,
Should I not then in meek thanksgiving shed
My choicest odours when the danger's fled ?

Mortal ! bethink thee—if at close of day
Both bird and flower their grateful homage pay,
This in sweet odour, that in tuneful song,
What thankful strains should flow from human tongue ?
O think what nobler mercies crown thy days,
Then be thy life one ceaseless act of praise !’

THE WEEPING WILLOW.

SALIX BABYLONICA.

"By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down, yea we wept when we remembered Zion.

"We hanged our harps on the willows that grew in the midst thereof."

After contemplating the solemn sadness of this touching picture drawn by the pen of inspiration, every other association connected with the willow must not only appear insipid, but almost impertinent, except, indeed, such as may be borrowed from the same hallowed source.

Every production of nature alluded to in the Bible seems at once invested with a sacred character, and possesses an indescribable interest. It is this which gives the willow a claim on our regard very far beyond what it might derive from the graceful effect of its drooping boughs, or indeed from any other quality by which it is distinguished. At the Feast of Tabernacles, when in commemoration of their fathers dwelling in tents during their forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, the Israelites were commanded to dwell in booths made of "goodly trees and rejoice before the Lord their God seven days," those selected for the occasion "were branches of palm trees and willows of the brook." To these Nehemiah adds branches of olive, pine, and myrtle. These being all tied together with gold and silver strings, were carried in procession by the people during the feast. This festival was further designed as a solemn acknowledgment of the mercy of God "who crowneth the year with his goodness," on the ingathering of the various fruits of the earth.

The Latin name Salix, signifying to spring up, well describes the rapid growth of the willow tribe. This characteristic, as well as its choice of situation, seems beautifully alluded to in Isaiah xliv. c. 4 v. "They shall spring up as among grass, as willows by the water courses." Not fewer than one hundred and forty-one different species of Salix have been enumerated by Sir James E. Smith. The one denominated Salix Babylonica (our English weeping willow) is a native of the Levant, the coast of Persia, and other places in the East. The manner of its introduction into England is curious; the account is as follows. Pope, the celebrated poet, having received a present of Turkey figs, observed a twig of the basket in which they were packed putting out a shoot.

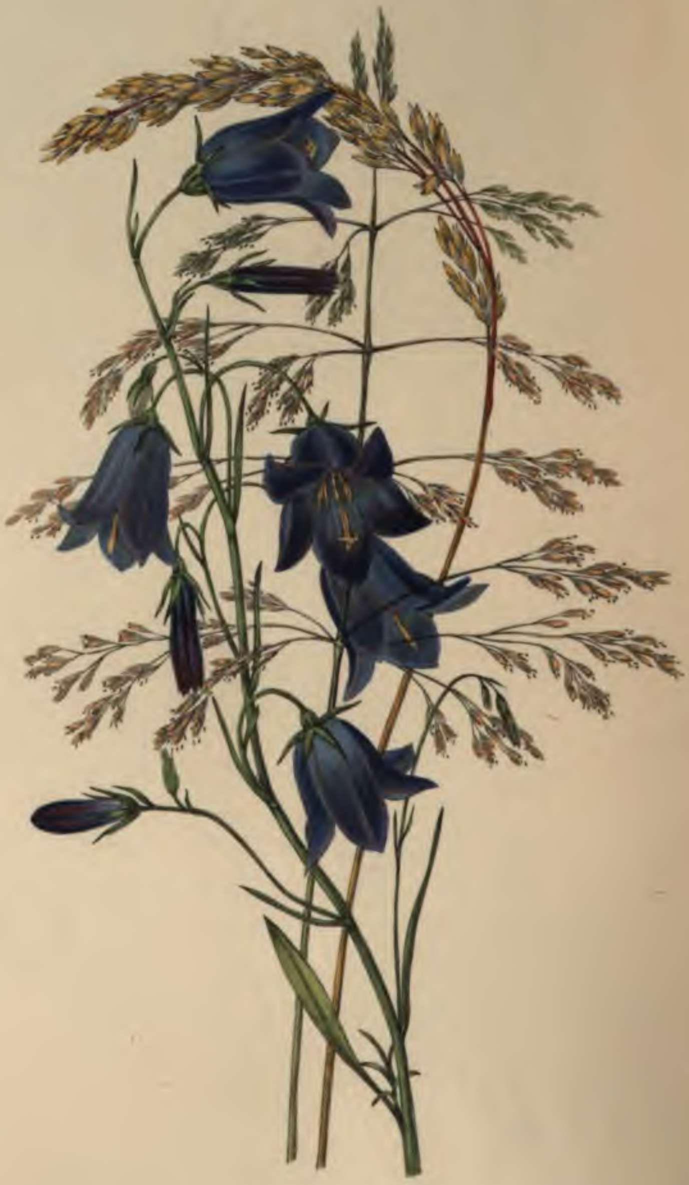
This twig he planted in his garden ; it soon became a fine tree, and from this stock all our weeping willows have descended. This particular tree was felled in 1801, a circumstance which one cannot help regretting. This species of willow is generally planted by a still pool, to which it is a beautiful and appropriate ornament ; and when in misty weather drops of water are seen distilling from the extremities of its branches, nothing can be more descriptive than the title it has obtained of weeping willow.

In ages past, where Babel's mighty waters
Roll'd darkly onward, sat a weeping band,
Poor remnant of proud Judah's sons and daughters,
Captives and exiles from their fathers' land.

And while their tears they mingled with the billow,
And while their foes the bitter taunt still flung
" Sing us the songs of Zion",—on the willow
Their silent harps with mournful meaning hung.

And e'er since then, that tree so sadly waving
By the still gliding stream, or plashy spring,
Whether suns brighten or dark storms are raving,
" Seems linked to sorrow like a holy thing,"

And still it offers to the broken-hearted
The friendly covert of its drooping bough.
O well it were, meek tree, when joy's departed,
If man like thee could bend him to the blow.



THE HARE-BELL AND GRASS.

CAMPANULA ROTUNDIFOLIA. GRAMEN.

"As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field so he flourisheth.

"For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more."

The exquisite adaptation of scriptural imagery to the subject intended to be illustrated, must be apparent to the commonest observer. Is sublimity required? "The heavens above, the earth beneath," nay even "things under the earth" are put in requisition to give dignity to the subject; and whilst imagination sinks under the accumulated grandeur of the figures employed, nothing seems strained, nothing out of place. In the same manner when pathos is intended, what can exceed the touching propriety, if one may so speak, of the illustrations selected? what, for instance, can form a more mournful comment on man's earthly history than the simile which compares him to grass, and his glory to the flower of the field? unless, indeed, we add to it the declaration of Job, "man that is born of a woman is of few days and *full of trouble.*"

'Twas not to tell of foes subdued,
Or battle spoils to bring,
Th' appointed herald daily stood
Before the Grecian king.

With solemn shout and trumpet's clang
Each morn this truth severe,
"Remember thou art mortal" rang
In royal Philip's ear.

And why? To ripen into deed
Each high and lofty aim,
And urge him on to win the meed,
The meed of deathless fame.

This record of the olden days
May useful hint supply,
But say, what herald shall upraise
For me the warning cry?

For I have deadlier foes to quell
  Than bowed 'neath Philip's spear,
And realms he wot not of, to win,
  Imperishably fair.

A blade of grass—a simple flower—
  Culled from the dewy lea,
These, these shall speak with touching power
  Of " change and death" to me.

For if " stars teach as well as shine,"
  Not less these gems of earth,
In budding bloom and pale decline,
  May pour instruction forth.

Come, then, and ever when I stray,
  Breathe still the solemn cry,
'Man and his glory, what are they?
Fragile as grass or flow'ret gay,
  Which blossoms but to die.'

THE ASPEN.

POPULUS TREMULA.

" I would not be
A leaf on yonder aspen tree
In every fickle breeze to play
Wildly, weakly, idly gay,
So feebly framed, so lightly hung
By the wing of an insect stirred and swung.

Proudly spoken, heart of mine,
Yet weakness and change perchance are thine,
More, and darker and sadder to see,
Than befal the leaves of yonder tree!

Look to thyself, then, ere past is Hope's reign,
And looking and longing alike are in vain;
Lest thou deem it a bliss to have been, or to be,
But a fluttering leaf on yon aspen tree."

The trembling poplar or aspen is a native of Europe, from Sweden to Italy. It is a tree of quick growth, readily springing up in any soil or situation. It will not however bear lopping like the black poplar; " thrusting down a more searching foot, and taking it ill to have his head cut off," as Evelyn quaintly expresses it. From the tremulousness of its leaves it has derived its name, and has also become a "by-word and a proverb." Amongst the wild glens of the Highlands, fit nurseries for superstitious fancies and traditionary legends, it is a current notion that the cross was made of this tree, and that therefore its leaves can never rest. To the philosopher, science offers a more satisfactory solution of the problem. "To the compression of the petiole," says Drummond, "we are chiefly to attribute the tremulous or turning motion of the leaves of this tree. The compression is chiefly at the end next the leaf; and as it is vertical, while the position of the leaf is horizontal, the slightest breath of wind throws the latter into agitation."

Daylight is closing, but the west
Still with the pomp of sunset glows,
And crimson cloud on mountain's breast,
And tower, and spire, its radiance throws,
While one by one in eastern skies
"The stars which usher evening rise."

How deep, how holy is the calm!
  Each sound seems hushed by magic spell,
As if sweet peace her honied balm
  Blent with each dew-drop as it fell.
Would that the cares which man pursue
A pause like this of nature knew.

Yet in this deep tranquillity,
  When e'en the thistle's down is still,
Trembles yon towering aspen tree,
  Like one whose by-gone deeds of ill,
At hush of night, before him sweep
To scare his dreams and " murder sleep."

Far off in Highland wilds, 'tis said,
  (But truth now laughs at fancy's lore)
That of this tree the cross was made
  Which erst the Lord of Glory bore,
And of that deed its leaves confess
E'er since a troubled consciousness.

We boast of clearer light, but say—
  Hath science, in her lofty pride,
For every legend swept away
  Some better, holier truth supplied?

What hath she to the wanderer given
To help him on his road to heaven?

Say who hath gazed upon this tree
With that strange legend in his mind,
But inward turned his eye to see
If answering feeling he could find,
A trembling for that guilt which gave
His Saviour to the cross and grave.

And who such glance did inward bend,
But scorned the apathy and pride
Which makes him slight that more than friend
For him who bled, for him who died;
Nor prayed his callous heart might prove
What 'tis to tremble, weep, and love?

THE TRAVELLER'S JOY.

CLEMATIS VITALBA.

"Some more aspiring catch the neighbour shrub
With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch,
Else unadorned, with many a gay festoon,
And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well
The strength they borrow with the grace they lend."

"Traveller's Joy" is the popular name of that species of clematis called clematis vitalba. It is a climbing shrub, with white almond-like scented flowers, growing best on a calcareous soil. "Its seeds," says Sir J. E. Smith, "have long, feathery, silky tails, forming beautiful tufts conspicuous in wet weather, and will retain their vegetative principle for many years, if kept dry." Like the ivy, it hangs pendulous from broken precipices or old walls, to which its clinging branches and cheerful blossoms lend a softening grace, and from this circumstance may have originated its well-known and well-deserved appellation of "Traveller's Joy."

The following lines were written after rather an extended tour through the western Isles and Highlands of Scotland. The voyage to Staffa, to which I have alluded in the second and sixth stanzas, was made under somewhat unfavorable circumstances, the weather proving stormy. On our return from it we heard of the wreck of the Rothsay Castle.

We have pierced the lone valley and climbed the steep mountain,
Where man and his doings were lost to our ken;
We have threaded the thicket, and traced to its fountain
The torrent which dashed through the wild rocky glen.

We have seen the blue lake both at rest and in motion,
Now chafe with the tempest, now peacefully sleep;
We have trusted ourselves on the bosom of ocean,
And can tell of the perils which frown o'er the deep.

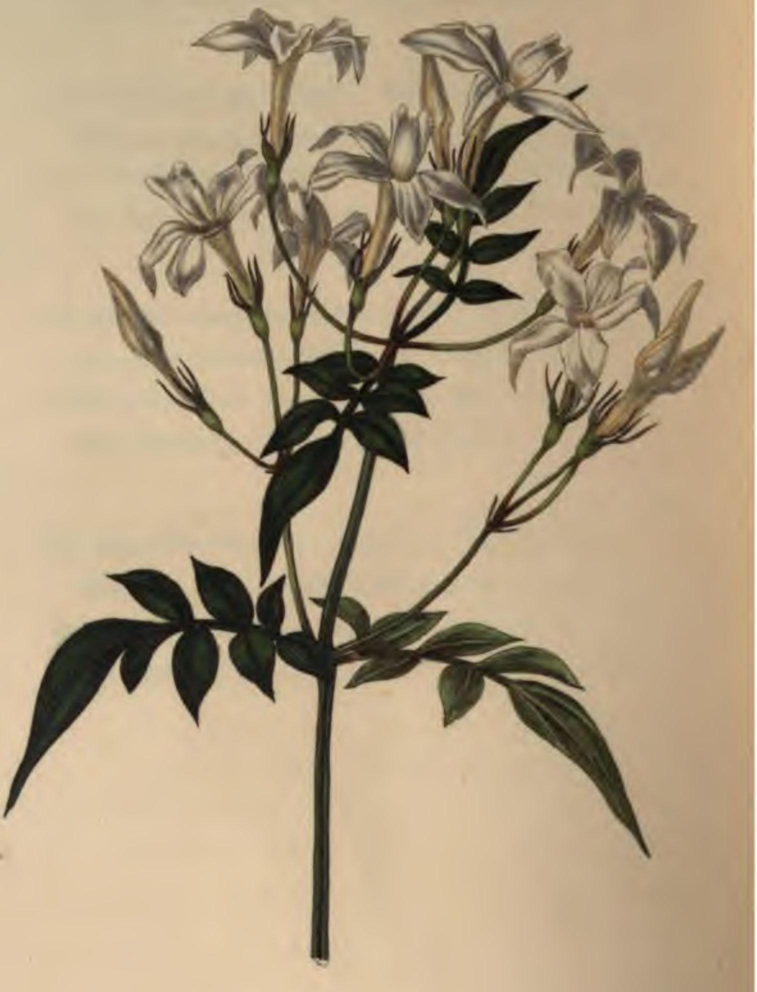
And now, like a bird to its loved nest returning
That heeds not of meadows and hedgerows the bloom,
We turn from them all—for each bosom is yearning,
To gain the sweet rest and the shelter of home.

Then to close round the fire and tell over light-hearted
The dangers and fears which no longer annoy,
With those from whose presence 'twas grief to be parted,
Oh this, surely this is " The Traveller's Joy."

But is joy our sole feeling? Shall nought be awarded,
When we speak of the past with its pleasures and fears?
No note of thanksgiving to Him who has guarded
Our footsteps from falling, our eye-lids from tears?

At noontide our path, and at midnight our pillow
His mercy protected, His watchfulness blest;
While others were whelmed in the dark rolling billow,
He guided our bark to a haven of rest.

Oh then when we meet and tell over light-hearted
The dangers and fears which no longer annoy,
With those from whose presence 'twas grief to be parted,
Let gratitude blend with " The Traveller's Joy."



THE JASMINE.

JASMINUM OFFICINALE.

——— "Luxuriant above all
The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,
The deep dark green of whose unvarnished leaf
Makes more conspicuous and illumines more
The bright profusion of her scattered stars."

The native country of our common white Jasmine is involved in some uncertainty; Linnæus says it may be claimed by India and Switzerland; "but," observes Martyn, "to the latter place it is confessedly exotic, although it is now so accustomed to the climate that it grows spontaneously on the rocks, particularly about Chiavenna." Miller affirms it to be a native of Malabar and other places in Hindoostan, and some writers say it is wild about Canton.

This shrub was cultivated by Gerarde in 1597, and he remarks that it was then "common in England, being used to cover banquetting houses in gardens and arbours."

There are several species of this elegant plant; amongst the most celebrated is the Arabian Jasmine, much cultivated in the east for the beauty and fragrance of its blossoms, which possess a scent something like the orange flower, but sweeter, and are held in such esteem that the women string them by way of ornament round the neck and amongst the hair.

> "Jasmines like a silver spray,
> Fragrant stars, and favorites they,
> When Indian girls on a festival day
> Braid their dark tresses."

Nor are the ladies alone indebted to it; of its stems are made the highly ornamented pipes* so needful to the enjoymemt of their idle and luxurious lords. Every species of jasmine is almost proverbially fragrant. It is related of the starry gardenia, or wild Cape jasmine, that when in full blow, its odoriferous perfume in an evening may be perceived at the distance of many miles, almost verifying the exquisite description of Milton;

> —— "As when to them who sail
> Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
> Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
> Sabæan odours from the spicy shore
> Of Araby the blest; with such delay
> Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league
> Cheered with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles."

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* Dallaway's Constantinople.

Our own now almost naturalized species cannot boast such powerful fragrance; but who that inhales the delicate scent it gives out, especially towards evening, could wish it altered either in kind or degree?

In early youth, ere life appeared
  The sober thing I since have found it,
Or disappointment yet had seared
  The garlands with which hope had crowned it,
How oft I longed, when thou, fair flower,
  At eve thy treasured sweets wert breathing,
To find in some lone glen a bower
  Which thy dark mantling sprays were wreathing,
And there, from morn to evening grey,
Muse tranquilly my life away.

But stern realities since then
  Have long such idle musings banished,
And at their touch the lonely glen
  And jasmine-shaded bower have vanished;

For I have seen the dark grave close
O'er some I loved, perchance too blindly,
And others, who once uttered vows
Of changeless friendship, look less kindly ;
Still learning with my added years,
That life has fewer smiles than tears.

But though wild fancy never more
Such fond conceits from thee may borrow,
Yet still I love thee, sweetest flower,
E'en for the hints thou yield'st to sorrow ;
Flowers that do bend all meek and pale
When storms arise, submission teach me ;
But when upon eve's chilly gale
I feel thy choicest odours reach me,
Thou shew'st me more than how to bend,
Yea, with submission praise to blend.

THE MAIDENHAIR.

ADIANTUM CAPILLUS VENERIS.

"Thy place is not where art exults to raise the tended flower
By terraced walk or decked parterre, or fenced or sheltered bower;
Nor where the straightly-levelled walls of tangled boughs between
The sunbeam sweeps the velvet sward and streams through alleys green."

The study of plants of the cryptogamic class, besides the comparative novelty of the pursuit, and the admiration it excites from the beauty and wisdom displayed in those minor productions of nature comprehended in this tribe of vegetables, has also another pleasure connected with it. "It leads the Botanist", says an interesting writer, "more frequently into wild and secluded scenes; it draws him from the parterre and the field, to converse with nature in her native garb, on heath and mountain, by untrodden streams and lakes, and along the sands and shores of the ocean." Ferns rank amongst the most beautiful and elegant productions of this class and constitute a very comprehensive genus. The number of Ferns at present discovered amounts to between six and seven hundred, and calculating on the increasing spirit of botanical research, no doubt it will receive continual accessions. "There are about fifty species in Great Britain, but so much more copious are they in intertropical countries, especially islands, that Plumier collected one hundred and sixty different species in St. Domingo and Martinique alone; and the native ferns of Jamaica already known amount to about two hundred." Plants of this class vary greatly in size, some growing to the height of even eighty feet, with stems of proportionate thickness; others may vie with the most delicate and minute specimens of nature's handy work. Amongst the latter ranks the Adiantum Capillus Veneris, so named from its slender capillary stalks, a most beautiful little fern, the only one of the numerous genus to which it belongs which is a native of the United Kingdom, and from its rarity considered no trifling prize by the botanist, having been only found as yet in some parts of Glamorganshire, in the south isles of Arran, and on the banks of the Carron, in Kincardineshire. This is a very succulent plant, and from it the French make a syrup, which, being perfumed with orange flowers, is called Capillaire. Wonderful properties were formerly attributed to the seed of Ferns, and the procuring of it was considered a deed of some daring, as it involved a contest with the powers of darkness. It was an exploit reserved for St. John's Night, as the wonderworking seed was supposed only to be visible at the hour of his birth; and when the prize was obtained, just "in the very nick of time," it was imagined that its possessor might become invisible at will. Thus Shakspeare says,

"We have the receipt of fern-seed, we walk invisible."

Furthermore, when certain prescribed rites were duly observed, it was thought to predict the fate of unmarried persons, and shew them whether or not it would be their destiny, like the rose "upon the virgin thorn," to "grow, live, and die in single blessedness."

This practice and belief is thus alluded to by Bidlake.

"The village maids mysterious tales relate
Of bright midsummer's sleepless nights; the fern
That time sheds secret seeds; and they prepare
Untold of rites, predictive of their fate:
Virgins in silent expectation watch
Exact at twelve's propitious hour, to view
The future lover o'er the threshold pass."

To those whose fate is fixed, and who have already bowed them to the yoke, the Maidenhair may offer a word of timely counsel.

Of thee, what can I sing or say,
Thou lowly, simple weed?
Tired fancy flags, nor will essay
To wake the tuneful reed.

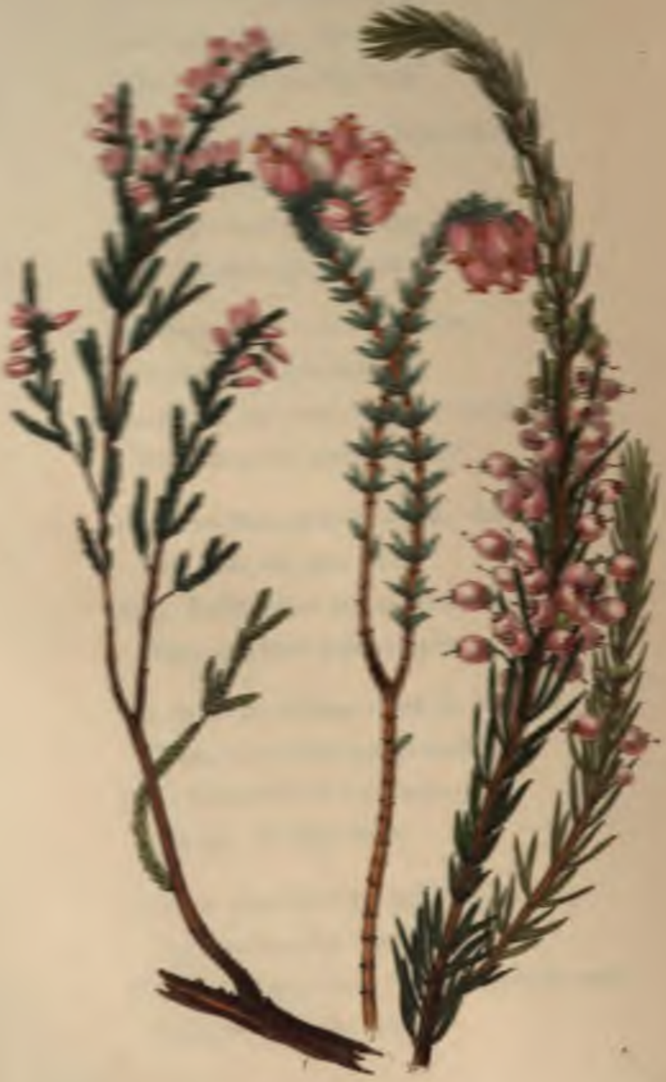
Thy name might in fond lover's breast
Poetic thoughts unfold,
And fairy dreams perchance suggest
Of tresses bright as gold.

But what to me is lover's dream,
Or tresses bright and fair?
Canst thou not start a soberer theme,
More meet for matron's ear?

Yes, thus thou speak'st—'My summer prime
Full soon will pass away,
And, Lady, thus will ruthless time
Turn brightest locks to grey.

But there are charms which do not fade
When youth and health decline,
Meet diadem for hoary head—
O Lady, be they thine!

That he who down the paths of life
Aye journeys by thy side,
May own, long hence, "how much the wife
Is dearer than the bride."'



THE HEATH.

ERICA.

——"The Erica here,
That o'er the Caledonian hills sublime
Spreads its dark mantle, (where the bees delight
To seek their purest honey,) flourishes,
Sometimes with bells like amethysts, and then
Paler, and shaded like the maiden's cheek
With gradual blushes."

Within the compass of a very few years this genus has become an object of great interest, and consequently of improvement. We are indebted to the Cape for most of the elegant species which now adorn our stoves; indeed, so abundant are they there, "that one botanist discovered one hundred and thirty distinct species between the Cape and the nearest range of mountains." But though so profusely scattered over immense tracts of land in Africa, and common throughout Europe, especially in the more temperate parts of the northern countries, strange to say, no species of heath has yet been discovered in the new world. Comparatively few of this beautiful genus are natives of Great Britain; those, however, that are so are mostly very abundant, especially in Scotland, which is emphatically the "land of brown heath;" there it is to be seen covering large tracts of moorish waste-land with its bright and fragrant blossoms, and, along with its elegant and hardy companion the bell-flower or harebell, tufting every ruined battlement, and peeping between the crevices of every splintered rock. They are thus linked together by the bard who could best appreciate their simple charms:

"Let Albyn bind her bonnet blue
With heath and harebell dipt in dew."

This idea of choosing the heath as a sort of national emblem may have been suggested to the poet by the circumstance of different species being the badges of some of the clans. The erica tetralix (which is depicted in the plate) being the badge of the M'Donalds, and the erica cinerea, or fine-leaved heath, belonging to the clan M'Alister. But whilst we delight, when wandering among the wild glens and moors of the Highlands, to see the

——— "Gentle modest heather-bell
Gladden its lonely birth-place:"

yet, viewing it as the accompaniment of barrenness and desolation, we cannot regret that it is not common in the laughing valleys and cultivated plains of merry England. It is thus regarded in the prophesy of Jeremiah, chapt.

vii. v. 6th, where a curse being proclaimed against the "man who maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord," it follows,

> "He shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited."

And again when the prophet foretels the destruction of Moab he says,

> "Flee, save your lives, and be like the heath in the wilderness."

The common ling, which, together with the cross-leaved and Cornish heaths, makes up the little group in the accompanying figure, grows freely on the yet uncultivated wastes of England, particularly in Westmorland and Cumberland. "There is a white-flowered variety, and a very beautiful red one cultivated in gardens, whose flowers, forming a copious multiplication of the corolla, resemble little roses."

Hail beautiful flower! on the wild moorlands growing,
Or wreathing the rock with thy garlands so fair,
That leav'st the rich mead where the calm rill is flowing,
For the torrent's vexed course and the free mountain air.

Hail child of the Highlands! what seemlier token
Could liberty wish for the fearless and brave,
When they rush down their mountains with spirits unbroken,
To claim from the spoiler or freedom or grave?

Since I've viewed thee afar in thine own highland dwelling,
There are spells clinging round thee I knew not before,
For to fancy's rapt ear dost thou ever seem telling
Of the pine-crested rock and the cataract's roar.

Almost as I view thee the breeze of the mountain
Floats round me with healing and joy on its wing,
Almost do I hear the wild gush of the fountain,
And see the dark cavern which cradles its spring.

Then well may I love thee, thou beautiful blossom,
And hail the low hum of thy murmuring bee,
For bright are the visions thou bring'st to my bosom,
And sweet the wild legends thou whisper'st to me.

THE YEW-TREE.

TAXUS BACCATA.

> "Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
> Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
> Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
> The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep."

"The yew," says Mr. Gilpin, "is a pure native of Britain. Formerly it abounded in our island, and was to our ancestors what the oak now is to their descendants, the basis of their strength." In the reign of Edward the Fourth, a law was enacted that every man throughout his dominions should have a bow of his own height, made of yew, wych, hazel, ash or awburne (perhaps alder.) But "as for brasell, elme, wych, and ashe," (says Roger Ascham) "experience doth prove them to be mean for bows, and so to conclude, ewe, of all other things, is that whereof perfite shootinge would have a bow made."

It has been remarked by botanists that the acerose or needle-shaped leaf, peculiar, with few exceptions, to those evergreens which usually grow in northern climates or on Alpine heights, such as the yew, pine, &c., fits them for braving the difficulties to which their situation exposes them ; as it allows the snow and wind free passage through the interstices, securing them alike from an overpowering accumulation of the one, and from the resistless fury of the other. It is also more especially amongst trees of this description, whose leaves present so many points and edges, that the wind makes that "wintry music" so powerfully affecting to the imaginative wanderer, soothing or rousing him according to the part it sustains in the grand chorus of nature. Burns, with all a poet's feeling, speaks of the enjoyment he experienced from this wild minstrelsy. Whilst listening to its varied cadences on a cloudy winter day, he remarks "it is my best season for devotion : my mind is wrapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to Him, who, in the pompous language of the Hebrew bard, 'walks on the wings of the wind'."

The yew when left to its own choice of situation, grows most freely in mountainous woods, or more particularly in the fissures of limestone rocks; but as in our days the native stock is greatly diminished, we are most familiar with it as the sentinel of the churchyard, for which its dark evergreen foliage renders it peculiarly appropriate ; and we almost merge "the good tough yew" of ancient times in the "funereal yew" of the present day. "Our forefathers were particularly careful in preserving this tree, whose branches it was usual to carry in solemn procession to the grave, and afterwards to place therein, under the bodies of their departed friends, considering it an apt symbol of that immortality which they hoped and expected for the persons there deposited."

The wood of the yew is red, beautifully veined, and very hard and smooth, which makes it valuable for ornamental purposes. Its twigs and leaves are poisonous, and have frequently proved fatal to cattle, and sometimes to the human species. It is perhaps this injurious quality, together with its being commonly planted in churchyards, that has led Shakspeare to make "slips of yew" one of the deadly ingredients in his witches' cauldron. This tree, like the oak, has obtained much notice from writers on sylvan scenery, and many individuals of the species celebrated for age, bulk, and legendary renown, are before the public, for the benefit of those who are curious in such subjects.

We must however single one from its fellows, not only on account of its great age, (for it is said to have flourished upwards of a thousand years,) but for the memorable events with which it is connected. The yew tree at Ankerwyke, near Staines, "was the silent witness of the conferences of those brave barons who afterwards compelled John to sign Magna Charta in its immediate vicinity. It is also said to have been the ill-omened witness of the meetings of the eighth Henry with Anne Boleyn, who was placed at Staines to be near Windsor."

Few weeks have sped since from yonder pile
  A merry chime was rung,
And blossoms meet for a fair young bride
  On the churchyard-path were flung.

But that chime is changed to a doleful knell,
  And those flowers so gay and fair
To funeral wreaths—for the youthful bride
  Now lies shrouded on her bier.

And by white-robed maids is she borne along
  To her grave beneath the shade
Of the lonely yew, and oh! loud is their wail
  As the last sad rites are paid.

Spell-bound I stood by that sentinel tree,
  And I could not choose but weep,
As one by one that sorrowing train
  Left the dead to her lonely sleep.

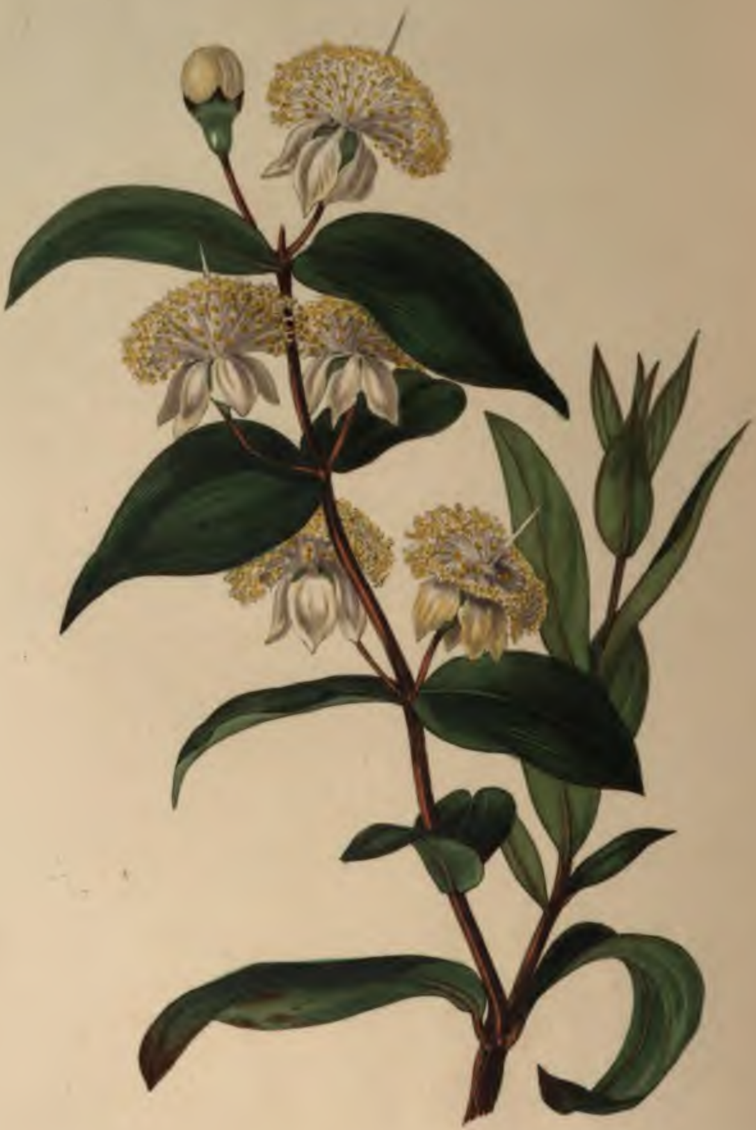
And as I mused on the fearful sights
That hoary yew had seen,
'Twas fancy, I know, but methought a voice
Thus sounded the gusts between.

'Yes, mortal, yes—I have that to tell
Would turn beauty's bright cheek pale,
Would cause the sallies of mirth to cease,
And e'en warriors' heart to quail.

I have seen the old, like a shock of corn,
Safe garnered in the tomb;
I have seen the babe of a few brief days
Cut off in its early bloom.

I have heard, o'er the grave of her only son,
The widow her wailings pour;
Then I've seen her turn to her desolate home
Now reft both of fence and flower.

Mortal—thou know'st not how passing short
Thy numbered days may be,
Oh, then, so live that, when comes the last,
Death may have no sting for thee.



THE MYRTLE.

MYRTUS.

"As in the hollow breast of Apennine,
Beneath the shelter of encircling hills,
A myrtle rises, far from human eye,
And breathes its balmy fragrance o'er the wild."

To how many classical associations is the myrtle allied. From its elegant simplicity it was held sacred to Venus; it was the symbol of magisterial authority; and it wreathed the sword of him who obtained a bloodless victory. Such were its ancient honours, and these, added to its beauty and fragrance, may well entitle it to the favour of the moderns. It is a native of Asia, Africa, and the new world; it also grows wild and most luxuriantly in the southern countries of Europe; and, though not indigenous in England, it bears without injury the milder winter of Devonshire and Cornwall. It is supposed by some to have been brought here by Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Francis Carew in 1585, after their residence in Spain. Others assign a later date to its introduction, but Evelyn rather corroborates the former notion as to the time of its first appearance amongst us, by stating, in 1678, that "he knew of a myrtle near eighty years old, which had been continually exposed, unless during very sharp seasons a little straw had been thrown upon it."

Gifted as it is both by nature and story, the myrtle seems to be the very subject for the muse; and we find when Milton enumerates "Flowers worthy of paradise" he does not forget it. And again when he twines the funereal chaplet for Lycidas, for which he culls every thing that is fair and fragrant without any apparent regard to elegiac character, he wreathes

"Myrtles brown with ivy never sere."

In the countries where it grows wild, it is sometimes found blooming amongst rocks; and its delicate beauty, when contrasted with the ruggedness of its abode, seems to acquire an additional charm.

"And where a dark rock rose behind,
(Their shelter from the northern wind,)
Grew myrtles with their fragrant leaves,
Veiled with the web the gossamer weaves
So pearly fair, so light, so frail
Like beauty's self more than her veil."

Yes take thy station here
Thou flower so pale and fair!
That I from thee may sweetest lessons borrow;
For thou hast that to tell,
Methinks, which suiteth well
The lingering hours of languishment and sorrow.*

The cleft rock is thy home,
Yet sweetly dost thou bloom,
E'en while the threatening winds are round thee swelling;
And where's the pampered flower
Can richer fragrance shower
Than thou, fair blossom, from thy storm-wrought dwelling?

Say, then, though pale decay
Wear youth and health away,
Shall sighs alone this troubled breast be heaving?
Oh no! I'll bless the chain
Which to this couch of pain
Has bound me long, for 'tis of mercy's weaving.

What though I tread no more
The temple's hallowed floor,

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* Thoughts in sickness.

Whence to our God the full-voiced hymn ascendeth ;
Yet may this chamber be
A blessed sanctuary,
Where to my whispered praise His ear He bendeth.

But chiefly, gentle flower,
Remind me in the hour
When 'gainst the tempter's might my soul engages,
A rock is cleft for me
More sure than shelters thee,
Where I may safely hide—" the Rock of Ages."*

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* " Rock of ages, cleft for me !"

THE OAK.

QUERCUS ROBUR.

"Happy Britannia!
Rich is thy soil and merciful thy clime,
Unmatched thy guardian oaks."

Assuming, as Great Britain does, the character of a naval country, her children may well give to "her native oak" unrivalled pre-eminence; for "from the time of Alfred, who first gave England a navy, to that of Nelson (about nine hundred years afterwards,) in whom nautical skill appears to have been raised to the greatest possible height, this tree was the principal and essential material in ship-building". The oak is remarkable for its slowness of growth, longevity, and bulk; and the most valued qualities of its timber are, as Mr. Gilpin observes, "hardness and toughness. Box and ebony are harder, yew and ash are tougher, but none of them possess both these qualities together in so great a degree as British oak." This tree lives to a patriarchal age, well deserving the emphatic epithet of "monumental oak" applied to it by Milton, and the more pompous title of Cowper—

"Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak."

Computing the years it has numbered by the concentric rings or layers of wood, each of which records a year, some of them carry us back many centuries. Evelyn and Gilpin, those biographers of the forest, mention several instances of remarkable longevity. The latter, indeed, speaks of " a few venerable oaks in the New Forest, that chronicle on their furrowed trunks ages before the conquest." To these authors we refer our readers for all the various legends, historical or fanciful, connected with the different sylvan worthies of this tribe which have done honour to our woods. Independently of its more valuable qualities, the true " unwedgable and gnarled oak" of Shakspeare, is the most picturesque of all the trees which adorn real English scenery. " It refuses no subject either in natural or artificial landscape. It is suited to the grandest, and may be introduced into the most pastoral, and even rustic scene:

' Hard by a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks.'

It adds dignity to the ruined tower and gothic arch, and throws its arms with propriety over the purling brook or the mantling pool."

To crown its other valuable qualities, no tree so well can bear up against the storm; indeed, it is supposed to acquire greater stability of root from every contest with the elements.

> "Mark yonder oaks! superior to the power
> Of all the warring winds of heaven they rise,
> And from the stormy promontory tower,
> And toss their giant arms amid the skies,
> While each assailing blast increase of strength supplies."

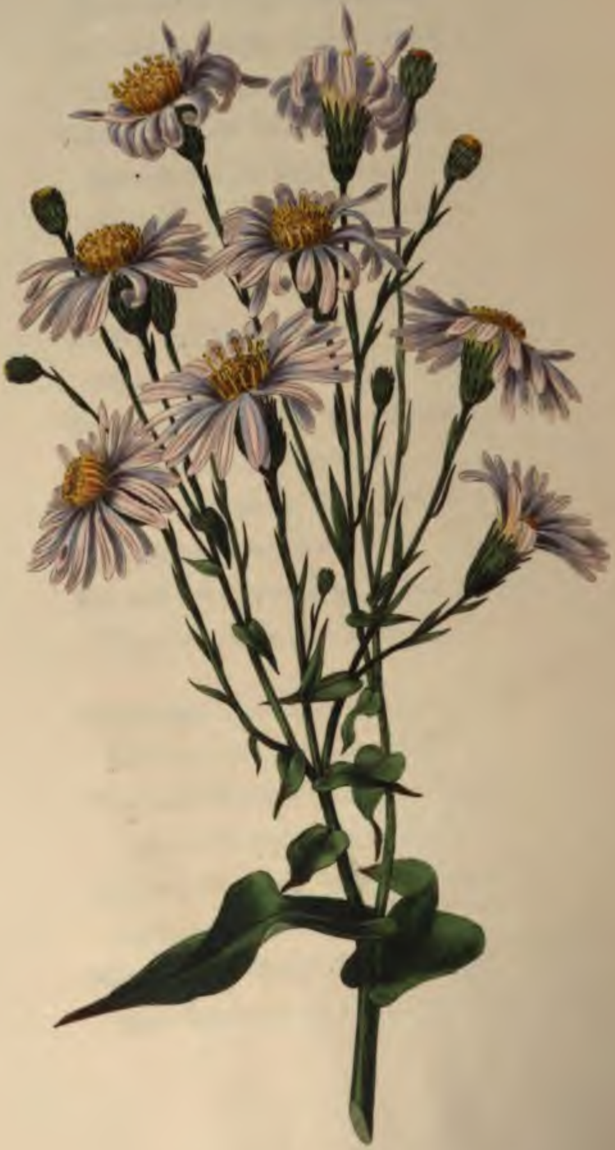
Proud monarch of the forest!
That once, a sapling bough,
Didst quail far more at evening's breath
Than at the tempest now,
Strange scenes have passed, long ages rolled,
Since first upon thy stem,
Then weak as osier twig, spring set
Her leafy diadem.

Perchance thy mid-day glory
Long since has past away,
Yet who that views thy giant bulk
Can link thee with decay?
No blight is on thy leaves, no branch
From thy huge trunk is torn,
And still in conscious might thou laugh'st
The hurricane to scorn.

And many a summer's bravery
Each ample bough shall grace,
And many an angry winter's storm
Thy hoary vigour brace,
Unless at call of " hearts of oak"
Beneath the axe thou bow
To bear the brunt of battle's rage
And thunder on the foe.

To thee but little recks it
What seasons come or go,
Thou lov'st to breathe the gale of spring
And bask in summer's glow,
But more to feel the wintry winds
Sweep by in awful mirth,
For well thou know'st each blast will fix
Thy roots more deep in earth.

Would that to me life's changes
Did thus with blessings come!
That mercies might like gale of spring
Cause some new grace to bloom !
And that the storm which scattereth
Each earth-born hope abroad,
Might anchor those of holier birth
More firmly on my God!



THE MICHAELMAS DAISY.

ASTER SEROTINUS.

" These few pale autumn flowers,
How beautiful they are!
Than all that went before,
Than all the summer store,
How lovelier far!

And why? They are the last!
The last! the last! the last!
Oh! by that little word
How many thoughts are stirred;
That sister of the past!

Pale flowers! pale perishing flowers!
I woo your gentle breath,
I leave the summer rose
For younger, blyther brows,
Tell me of change and death."

By far the larger proportion of this genus are natives of South America, whence they have been brought here. The asters are a numerous tribe, and from the variety and brilliancy of the colour of most of them, they make a pleasingly conspicuous figure amongst our autumnal flowers. Perhaps the most admired species is the China Aster, the seeds of which (according to Miller) were brought from China to France by the Missionaries, where it obtained the name of La Reine Marguerite or Queen Daisy. But whilst some of these plants assume an almost gaudy appearance, others, which blossom later, have a very wan and sickly hue, harmonizing well with the declining season; on this account we do not deny them that share of our regard which they seem meekly to solicit, but which they certainly would not obtain did they bloom when the garden is in its prime.

‘ The last brilliant smile of gay summer has shone,
Her last rose has blossomed, is faded and gone,
Her soft-winged breezes have heaved their last sigh,
Her bright tints have vanished from earth, sea, and sky,
And the wild gale of autumn a requiem pours
O'er sun-beams departed and languishing flowers;
Then wherefore, unwarned by the dying and dead,
To yon cold gloomy sky dost thou lift thy pale head?

Can it be that thou com'st at this desolate hour,
To exult o'er the fallen in thicket and bower;
Or, ambitious of state, wouldst thou rather thus reign
When the rose has departed, then bow in her train?

'Oh! wrong me not thus—not to triumph I come
O'er the brake without song and the meads without bloom;
For had such been my wish, I had borrowed the crest
Of the gay flaunting poppy, or tulip's bright vest;
But so homely of form and so sickly of hue,
What have I with ambition or triumph to do?
By the sound of the wind, by the gloom of the sky,
Oh I know that the death-pang of nature is nigh,
And I come when the fragrant and bright pass away,
To cheer by my presence her languid decay.
Nor heed I the chill dew upon my breast lying,
'Tis the tear which affection sheds over the dying;
And the cold and the gloom I do pensively brave,
For I would not that sunbeams should shine on her grave.
O lady—should sorrow e'er darken that brow
Where hope all unclouded rests cheerily now,
And the throng that now court thee in pleasure's gay hour,
Pass away in thy grief, as with summer the flower;

May one friend yet be left thee thy cares to beguile,
And to share in thy grief as she shared in thy smile!
Then think of the blossom which comes forth to cheer,
When all else have departed, the fall of the year.'

BLACK HELLEBORE OR CHRISTMAS ROSE.

HELLEBORUS NIGER.

"While some few lingering blooms the brow befriend
Of hoary winter, and with grace serene
Inwreath the king of storms with mercy's gentler sheen."

This plant is a native of mountainous situations in Greece, Italy, Germany, Austria, Idria, and Silesia. It is called with us the black hellebore from the dark colour of its roots, and the Christmas rose from the time of its flowering and the colour of the corolla. It was well known to the ancients, "Anticyra, a city of Phocis, being famous among them for the hellebore it produced." It was considered a specific for many diseases, particularly for insanity; hence arose the proverb "send the madman a voyage to Anticyra." Horace also notices it in his third Satyre, book second: the passage is thus translated. "By far the largest portion of Hellebore is to be administered to the covetous: I know not whether reason does not consign all Anticyra for their use." This species was cultivated by Gerarde in 1596, but the exact time of its introduction amongst us is not known. Its roots are still used medicinally, and its pale blossoms, opening in the dreary winter months, cannot fail to attract admiration, giving as they do a mournful grace to the then flowerless border.

What time December's chilling blast
  Has stript each bough the forest thorough,
One flower yet decks the wintry waste,
  Like friendship in the hour of sorrow;
And, 'mid the wreck of all that's fair,
Throws its pale wreaths on nature's bier.

With lavish sweets or dazzling bloom
  It does not mock her faded glory,
Nor breathes, to cheat the deepening gloom,
  Of coming spring the flattering story;
Rather 'twould rouse our dormant fear,
And this its theme, the closing year.

The closing year—a startling sound,
  E'en when on youthful ear 'tis pealing,
For oh! as time completes his round,
  This thought must o'er the breast be stealing,

That from sweet Hebe's chaplet gay
Another rose has passed away.

The closing year—a louder note
   For manhood's stormier hour 'tis sounding;
Athwart the thousand schemes which float,
   The hopes which in his heart are bounding,
The cares which vex him and enthrall,
It throws a dark funereal pall.

The closing year—to age, dim age,
   A low and solemn dirge 'tis singing;
It sternly bids him disengage
   Each hope, each thought, to earth that's clinging,
And opens to his waning eye
The grave where he so soon must lie.

The closing year—would that it found
   Youth, manhood, age but meet for glory!
Then little recks it whether crowned
   With budding rose, or tresses hoary
We sink to rest—years then will be
Merged in a bright eternity!

THE BAY AND PALM.

THE BAY.

LAURUS NOBILIS.

"The laurel, meed of mighty conquerors
And poets sage."

The laurus nobilis, or sweet bay, though but a shrub in our country, in Asia and the southern parts of Europe, its proper birthplace, attains to the height of twenty or thirty feet. It grows very freely on the banks of the river Peneus in Thessaly, and hence perhaps the fable of the metamorphosis of Daphne, daughter of that river. It also with classic propriety adorns mounts Ida and Athos. There has long been some confusion between the laurel and the bay;* the former, though but known to modern time, has been believed by the ignorant to be the tree so venerated by "the mighty dead,"—the classic bay; the mistake may have originated in the latter being called laurel and its fruit being named bayes.

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* Gray (the poet) observes and corrects an error on this subject. Speaking of a work he had just been reading, he says the author "fancies the Roman Laurus to be our Laurel; though it is undoubtedly the bay-tree, which is *odoratum*, and, I believe, still called Lauro, or Alloro, at Rome."

This tree being held sacred to Apollo, the poet only seems to have a right to claim it as his own; but we have the authority of the ancients for extending the privilege to other aspirants after fame, as in early times it was seen by turns encircling the brows of the prince and the warrior as well as the poet. Having now asserted the rights of this tree and restored to it its "local habitation and its name," we may advert to one or two peculiarities belonging to it.

Evelyn says that while young this tree grows best under its "mother's shade where nothing else will thrive," thus forming a comment on a passage in Virgil, translated by Martyn, "The little Parnassian bay shelters itself under the shade of its mother." It seems also to possess in a remarkable degree the power of resuscitation: long after it has appeared dead, if left undisturbed, it will put forth leaves again and assume its pristine vigour. On this account a sprig of bay was formerly thrown on the coffin at the time of interment, being considered a striking symbol of the resurrection of the dead. At the period when such customs were more rigidly adhered to, it also formed part of the Christmas wreath, and together with holly and other evergreens was wont to deck houses and churches, &c. Gay thus alludes to the circumstance.

"When rosemary, and bayes, the poets' crown,
Are bawled in frequent cries through all the town;
Then judge the festival of Christmas near,
Christmas, the joyous period of the year,
Now with bright holly all the temples strew,
With laurel green, and sacred misseltoe."

Many more interesting anecdotes and associations connected with the bay might be added to the above, but we must leave them to other hands, and notice its noble rival, the palm.

THE PALM.

PALMA.

"Meek souls there are, who little deem
Their daily strife an angel's theme,
Or that the rod they take so calm
Shall prove in heaven the martyr's palm."

Whatever praise may be awarded to the bay, will be disposed to withold yet higher honour from palm. Like its classic associate (with which it was often blended) it was considered an appropriate meed for the victor, but more generally it was reserved for religious triumphs ; and from this, as well as from the prominent place it occupies in holy writ, we always feel disposed to invest it with something of a sacred and solemn character. But we must leave these considerations alone for a while, till its natural peculiarities and real utility have been briefly noticed.

There are many different species of this magnificent tree, amongst which the cocoa nut, the sago, and the date palms are the most valuable. The latter is par eminence the palm of the ancients. It is a tree of slow growth, and " even in the soil and clime most congenial old trees do not gain above a foot in height in five years, so that, supposing the increase uniform, the age of a tree, sixty feet high, cannot be less than three hundred years."

Though there are even fine forests of the date-palm in the more luxuriant parts of the province of Valentia, and though it grows abundantly in some other places in the south of Europe, it is in warmer latitudes only that it perfects its fruit, and it is there that the cultivation of the date palm is considered a matter of great moment. Indeed, " in the interior of Barbary, Egypt, Arabia, and the dry districts of Syria, it is almost the sole object of agriculture, and the date harvest is anticipated with as much anxiety, and, when a plentiful one, is attended with as general rejoicing, as the vintage of the south of Europe." And no wonder, for the date either in a fresh or prepared state forms the chief sustenance of the inhabitants during ten months of the year. Its trunk also supplies a sap, from which a fermented liquor is made called "Lakhlsy." Thomson thus refers to it,

> "And from the palm to draw the freshening wine."

Whilst the method of procuring it seems thus alluded to by Milton—

> "The savoury pulp they chew, and in the rind
> Still as they thirsted scoop the brimming stream."

We must not forget in enumerating the benefits it confers, to notice the effect of a palm, or group of palms, when seen in the distance, on the mind of the weary and thirsty wanderer of the desert; not only is the shelter it offers from a vertical sun anticipated with feelings he only can experience, but he thinks of the fountain which springs at its foot, and in his eagerness to obtain the life-dispensing draught, he hurries on forgetful alike of difficulties and fatigue.

There is a species of palm growing on the shores of the Orinoco, which affords to the natives both food and habitation when the country is under water, a circumstance of frequent occurrence; the whole scene is thus forcibly described by the poet,

> " Wide o'er his isles the branching Oronoque
> Rolls a brown deluge; and the native drives
> To dwell aloft on life-sustaining trees
> At once his dome, his robe, his food, and arms."

The graceful form of the palm, its growing on the verge of great deserts where few other vegetable productions will live, and the high esteem in which it is held in eastern countries on account of its real utility, have secured to it the favour of the muse. Milton names it with other trees as forming " the enclosure green" which encircled the garden of Eden :

> ———" Overhead upgrew
> Insuperable height of loftiest shade,
> Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm
> A sylvan scene."

But we must turn from the page of poetry to that of inspiration, as the palm derives its chief honour from the frequent notice it there obtains. In the book of Ecclesiasticus its stately beauty furnishes wisdom with an apt similitude—" I was exalted like a palm tree in Engaddi." " To express or delineate prosperity and opulence," says bishop Lowth, " a comparison is assumed from the cedar or the palm ;" thus in the ninety-second psalm, verse the thirteenth, " The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree." Its common use in religious ceremonies has been before adverted to ; indeed, its introduction into all the solemn festivals of the Jews was by divine appointment ; and these were so frequent that Judæa was typified by the palm tree upon the coins of Vespasian and Titus.

Since the Christian era it is associated with more touching and glorious recollections—our Saviour's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, which event was formerly commemorated in Christian countries by carrying branches of palm in solemn procession ; on that account the Sunday before Easter still retains the name of Palm Sunday. There is yet another honour reserved for it. When earthly distinctions are passed away " as a tale that is told," the palm is held forth in the Book of Revelations as symbolic of the final victory of the just.

" After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."

Not around the peaceful bower
Should thy verdant branches twine,
Though thy leaves through wintry hour
With unchanging lustre shine:
There are fitter scenes than this for thy bloom.
On the poet's lofty brow
Let thy classic garlands glow,
Or if he lieth low
On his tomb.

Or, returned from well-fought field,
When the victor throws aside
Both his dinted helm and shield
And his sword in crimson dyed,
O'er his trophies let thy green branches wave;
For what so fit a meed
From the country he has freed,
As the laurel-wreath decreed
To the brave.

Such the deeds thou lov'st to grace—
But thou proud triumphal tree,
Soon shall time thy wreaths deface,
And those deeds forgotten be;
Born of earth, with things of earth they must die;

But there is a fame shall last
When earth's flitting glory's past,
And a branch no adverse blast
Shall destroy.

'Tis like thee the victor's meed,
But it decks not poet's grave,
Nor the warrior's martial deed,
No—'tis only seen to wave
Where the martyr's honored dust doth repose ;
Or his, who broke the gloom
Long of pagan lands the doom,
And made " the desert bloom
As the rose."

But where's the power of thought
Which may pierce those scenes sublime
When the Christian's fight is fought,
And o'er sin and death and time
Through heaven-imparted might he hath won ;
When he joins the glorious band
Who as crowned victors stand,
Each with palm-branch in his hand
Round the throne

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

ORNITHOGALUM UMBELLATUM.

Yes, yes all have a voice! the heavens above,
The earth beneath, and things that underneath
Lie deeply hidden—all send out a sound
And lecture man, the wandering, and the lost
In holy lore.

To the "storied" names of certain plants, such as the "passion flower," the "star of Bethlehem," &c. the solitary wanderer is indebted for many a pleasing and solemn train of reflection, in pursuing which, he is disposed to say with the poet,

"To give them thus a tongue
Is wise in man."

The flower under immediate consideration, grows naturally in most parts of southern Europe, in orchards, vineyards, and thickets; in our island it is held by some botanists as a "doubtful native," though found apparently wild in many places. "Its petals are of a brilliant enamelled white on the upper side, and green underneath," and their starlike arrangement most probably suggested the appellation by which it is known amongst us.

In putting this and the following piece at the close of my little work I have departed from its general arrangement, that of placing each flower according to the time of blowing, as from the solemn moral inculcated, they appear better adapted than any other for the concluding stanzas.

Star of the earth! whose very name awakes
Memories that ne'er should sleep, but which too oft
    (O shame on thankless man!)
    In deep oblivion lie,

I love thy modest charms, which not to earth
Enchain the glance they woo, but rather seem
    To lead it back to heaven,
    And fix it ever there.

Oh! whilst I gaze thou breath'st a wondrous tale,
Not of gay summer bird, or murmuring bee,
    Of sunshine and of shower,
    The flow'ret's wonted theme.

But how the opening heaven gave forth to view
Its glorious inmates, who in chorus sang
Glory to God on high,
On earth good will to man.

And how a new bright star, till then unknown
To the clear depths of midnight's azure skies,
Sages from farthest east
With gifts prophetic* led.

Led—till at last it stood, with fixed beam,
Where peaceful lay a manger-cradled babe,
Low at whose feet they bend
And their choice treasures pile.

Here stays thy history, beauteous chronicler,
Sweet sister of that pale mysterious flower
Which, oh! how fitly ends
The tale by thee begun.

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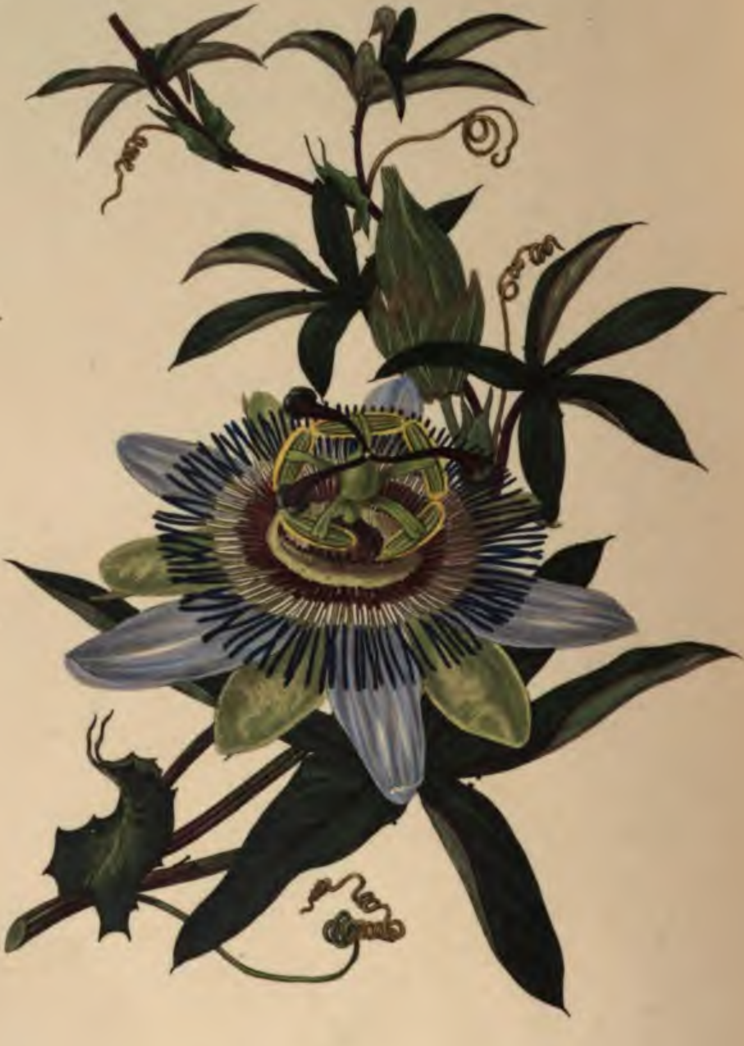
* It was the common opinion of the Fathers of the Church, that the offerings of the wise men had a reference to the threefold character of Christ, that of prophet, priest, and king.



THE PASSION FLOWER.

PASSIFLORA CERULEA.

" And one more plant my humble muse inspires,
Round which my parting thoughts would fondly cling:
Which, consecrate to Salem's peaceful king,
Though fair as any gracing beauty's bower,
Is linked to sorrow like an holy thing,
And takes its name from suffering's fiercest hour:—
Be this thy noblest fame, imperial Passion-flower."

If we are indebted to Africa for most of our choicest heaths, we owe to America the genus Passiflora which comprehends several species, all of which are eminently beautiful. Most of them require artificial heat, repaying the care bestowed upon them by the ornamental effect they give to our stoves. They belong to the climbing order of plants, and some of them (the passiflora quadrangularis, for instance,) are mentioned by travellers as hanging their elegant blossoms in festoons around the highest trees in tropical forests. In Cook's voyages a curious fact is recorded of this genus and other plants of a similar character. So closely do they interlace the branches of the most gigantic trees, that even when their trunks have been severed, they are prevented from falling by this apparently fragile, but firm support.

The species chosen to illustrate the present work (passiflora cerulea) is now so far naturalized as to bear, with very little attention, our ordinary winters, and is a very elegant appendage to whatever it may attach itself. But to the imaginative florist its beauty and elegance do not form its main attractions; to him it derives along with its name, its greatest interest from the prevalent notion that all the instruments of Christ's passion are represented in it, and

"Whatever impulse first conferred that name,
Or fancy's dream or superstition's art,
He freely owns its spirit touching claim,
With thoughts and feelings it may well impart:—
Not that he would forego the surer chart
Of Revelation for a mere conceit;
Yet with indulgence may the Christian's heart
Each frail memorial of his Master greet
And chiefly what recals his love's most glorious feat."

The frequent allusion to flowers in holy writ, and above all (with reverence be it spoken) their connection with the history of Him "whom to know is life, and joy to make mention of His name," seems to invest them with a sacred character. He referred us to them for instruction. He wore their thorns, and

> "Circled by them, He sank awhile to rest,
> Not the grave's captive, but a garden's guest;"

and finally He has won for us

> ——— "The thornless crown of amaranthine bloom."

Oh! ne'er with cold and careless glance gaze I on thee, sweet flower,
Nor thoughtless pluck thee as I'm wont thy sisters of the bower,
No,—fancy gifts thee with a spell unknown to all beside,
Which checks the hand thy beauty woos, "and quells the glance of pride."

Each flower some fairy legend owns to joy or sorrow dear,
Or simply beautiful, just such as wins gay childhood's ear;
But both to aged and to young, from cot to lordly hall,
Thou, thou hast that to tell should hold each human
heart in thrall.

Each flower some chosen emblem is; one is for beauty's
bloom,
Another friendship claims, a third sheds fragrance o'er
the tomb;
But linked with holy memories, to penitence how dear!
Thy shrine is aye the broken heart, thy dew contrition's
tear.

Would I such shrine could offer thee, and on thy pale
leaves shed
Those sadly sorrowing tears which fall but when the
heart has bled,
But, ah! like sealed fount that heart withholds the tribute
due,
Though lesser sorrows find it still to gentle pity true.

Yet dear I hold thy sacred lore, and oft with curious eye,
Do trace the mystic characters which in thy bosom lie,

Types of those fearful instruments of agony and scorn,
The cross which bore the Lord of life, the nail, the twisted thorn.

And now of many a cultured flower and many a wilding spray
I've sung, but thou the fittest seem'st to grace my closing lay;
Then come, and round my simple harp thy wreaths symbolic fling,
Lest meaner theme again should wake its consecrated string.

R. PERRING, PRINTER, LEEDS.

ERRATA

f the Preface, line 18, for Mr. [illegible]
read Dr. [illegible]

line 14, for applications, [illegible]

line 4, for [illegible], [illegible]